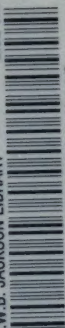


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ANGLO-SAXON EDUCATION OF WOMEN

FROM HILDA TO HILDEGARDE

BY

HELEN DOMINICA LEIBELL, M. A.

A DISSERTATION

*Submitted to the Faculty of Georgetown University,
Washington, D. C., U. S. A., in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy*

WASHINGTON, D. C., U. S. A.

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By

HELEN DOMINICA LEIBELL

To My
FATHER AND MOTHER

PREFACE

Much has been said and written in recent years concerning the education of women. A casual reader might be led to infer that woman today is enjoying intellectual advantages never before shared by her sex. But the student of history knows that from the very dawn of Christianity the portals of learning's temple have been open wide to both men and women.

The five centuries between St. Hilda and St. Hildegarde were prolific of strong women whose intellectual acumen has not been surpassed in any other period of the world's history. The Teutonic races in England and along the Rhine, between the seventh and twelfth centuries, accorded to woman a unique position. Her dignity was respected, her ability was acknowledged, and her freedom was unquestioned.

When these vigorous people experienced the refining influence of the Church of Rome, the feminine mind reached a degree of development in accordance with the universally recognized standards of the times. Anglo-Saxon women distinguished themselves in the arts and sciences of their day. What their talent and industry, under the fostering care of the Church, accomplished for the economic and intellectual welfare of mankind is hard to over estimate. Their spiritual influence casts a halo over the whole period of Anglo-Saxon culture which makes the epoch shine with unrivaled brilliance in the annals of ecclesiastical history.

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CHAPTER I

EDUCATION IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

From the dawn of its foundation, the Church of Christ has been a teaching institution. Its Founder is the greatest teacher the world has ever seen. His coming marks the turning point not only in secular history, but in human thought. Since His advent, "doctrines concerning the nature of God, the immortality of the human soul, and the duties of men, which the noblest intellects of antiquity could barely grasp, have become the truisms of the village school, the proverbs of the cottage, and of the alley."¹ The code of morals formulated and promulgated in the Sermon on the Mount, has civilized the world. He who said "Go and teach all nations," also pleaded that the little children should come unto Him.

The office and privilege of teaching is a Pentecostal gift which was utilized in its fullness by the immediate followers of Jesus Christ. And not by them only, but all down the centuries it has been literally fulfilled by the men and women who carry on His sacred mission. In her heaven-sent quest for souls, the Church regards not sex. Among the teachers and the taught she views only that for which Christ lived, labored, and died.

True, when the Twelve set out on their apostolic mission, their aim was not the transmission of mere secular knowledge. Christ came to found a religion, not a philosophy. But in that religion was shrouded loftier thought than ever baffled a Plato or an Aristotle. The Apostolic College, with but few exceptions, was composed of men who were unlettered, according to the intellectual standards of their day. But by communicating their religious doctrines to others, they became the world's greatest educators. Their "strange story of a crucified God" transformed civil society.

The word education may be derived from *educere*, to lead

¹ Lecky: *History of European Morals*. Vol. II.

out, or from *educare*, to nourish. Either derivation warrants our regarding the Apostles and their disciples as educators in the truest sense of the word. They drew human souls from the darkness of paganism to the brightness of a vigorous spiritual life. They nourished them with the strong meat of supernatural truth and the vivifying draught of sanctifying grace.

St. Peter, the head of the Apostolic College, at once began to form the minds of his young followers, that in them a new generation might find leaders. At the end of his first Epistle, he refers to Sylvanus, who may have been his amanuensis. Again he mentions "Mark, my son," whom St. Jerome does not hesitate to call "the *disciple* of St. Peter." When he entered Rome, the Prince of the Apostles found open hospitality in the homes of Aquila, Prisca, and Pudentia. These noble women, in their own domestic circle, became the first Christian teachers of their sex in the capital of the Roman world.

When Saul the Pharisee became Paul the Christian, the Church of Christ gained to its cause the greatest intellect of Judaism. The scholar of Tarsus, the pupil of Gamaliel, was more enthusiastic in preaching the Gospel than he had been zealous in defending the law of Moses. He was versed in all the secular knowledge of his day. In his Epistles he did not hesitate to refer to pagan authors. He viewed philosophy as a "*Praeparatio Evangelica*." He knew its intrinsic worth and he realized its apparent dangers for the new religion. Years after his conversion, writing to the Colossians, he warns them to "beware lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ." He bids the Corinthians to be "not *children* in understanding." And he admonishes the Ephesians "to *nurture* their children, to bring them up, in the discipline and correction of the Lord."

It was this discipline, this correction, that formed the foundation of Christian teaching. All the writings of the Apostles and the early Fathers of the Church reverberate with admonitions to self-mastery, rigid discipline of mind and body, joined to the gentler characteristics of mutual love and forbearance. "As the strength of the body," says Locke, "lies chiefly in being able to endure hardships, so also does that of the mind. And

the great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this, that a man is able to *deny himself*, his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, though the appetite lean the other way.”²

While St. Paul trained his Timothy, he was not unmindful of Timothy's grandmother, Lois, nor of his mother, Eunice. The Sacred Writings tell us how well versed they were in the lore of their day. In his Epistles, St. Paul has immortalized the names of Lydia of Philippi, Evodia and Synthyche; Cloe and Priscilla and Phoebe of Cornith; and Thecla of Iconium. In his learned work on *St. Paul*, Abbé Fouard says that this Phoebe probably had the honor of being the bearer of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, for the Apostle writes of her in these terms: “I recommend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the Church which is at the port of Kenchrea, in order that you should receive her, in the name of the Lord, as it becomes us to receive the saints, and that you assist her in all things wherein she may have need of you; for she herself has assisted many and me in particular.” So ardent was the zeal and devotedness of the Corinthian women in the great Cause, that we can readily infer the prominent position they assumed in the teaching body of the Church.

In the course of time, these women quite naturally formed themselves into societies which are known to us as the Deaconesses of the Apostolic Church. St. Paul was their organizer. Besides the assistance of the poor, visiting the sick, and the duties of hospitality, he entrusted to them a share in the higher functions of the ministry, such as instructing and consoling members of their own sex, preparing them for Baptism, strengthening them in faith and piety, and superintending their religious gatherings.

Greece had had her Aspasia and her Sappho. But they were isolated cases. In the early days of the New Dispensation, intelligent women were not few. By the doctrines of Christ, “woman was immeasurably elevated over her state in paganism. She was no longer the chattel or slave of man, but his companion, who shared an equal dignity with him before

² Locke: *Thoughts concerning Education*.

the Creator. Marriage became a holy union, a sacrament; motherhood was blessed; and children were held to be gifts of God. They were the objects of Christ's special dilection, and were held up by Him as the embodiments of that innocence and purity He desired to see in His followers. For their training in the knowledge and fear of the Lord the parents were directly responsible."³

St. Jerome tells us that "Polycarp, disciple of the Apostle St. John, and by him ordained bishop of Smyrna, was chief of all Asia, where he saw and had as teachers some of the Apostles and of those who had seen the Lord." In another chapter, he speaks of "Papias, the pupil of John," and of "Quadratus, disciple of the Apostles." This Apostolic custom of training young people to carry on the mission of Christ was "the far-off dawns of a system which, with varying fortunes, was to lead up to the episcopal, or cathedral schools of the middle ages, and the seminaries of modern times."

Speaking of the Lateran church, the Pope's first cathedral, Cardinal Newman, in his *Historical Sketches*, writes: "Strict as a monastic novitiate, it nevertheless included polite literature in its course; and a library was attached to it for the use of the seminarists." Each age, he adds, "has its own character and its own wants; and we trust that in each a loving Providence shapes the institutions of the Church as they may best subserve the objects for which she has been sent into the world."

During the first five centuries of the Christian era, the teaching institutions of the Church may be divided into the catechumenal schools, the catechetical schools, and the monastic schools. The first kind were founded to meet the need of instructing pagan converts. They offered a preparation for the sacrament of Baptism. In the beginning, the instructors were bishops, priests, and deacons, but later on this work was conducted by clerics in minor orders and by laymen. The pupils were of two classes; the inquirers, or those who came to learn the Christian religion, and were not yet accepted as candidates for Baptism; and those who, after a systematic course of instruction, were accepted. These latter were, properly speak-

³ McCormick: *History of Education*.

ing, the catechumens. The method employed to transmit knowledge was question and answer, catechetical. It was only after two or three years of probation that candidates were admitted to the initial sacrament, and thereby became members of the Church. When persecutions ceased and the dangers of apostasy decreased, the time of probation was lessened, until during the reign of Gregory the Great, it was reduced to forty days.

Their training comprised something higher than intellectual instruction. During these days the rich, varied ritual of the Church was being developed, and it was part of the aim of these schools to cultivate among the Faithful a keen appreciation of the mystic meanings of the liturgy. The body of the Faithful rapidly increased. Among their members were peasant and prince, slave and centurion, bond and free. Theirs was a *reasonable* service, and to them must be given *a reason* for the faith that was in them. This gave us the beginnings of our Catholic theology, the roots of which are in Holy Scripture, especially in the New Testament and the Epistles of St. Paul. Then appear on the intellectual horizon, the Fathers of the Church who, by their writings and teachings, have become the progenitors of our Faith.

With the victory of the Milvian Bridge, persecutions ceased. The Faithful emerged from the catacombs and soon took a leading part in the mental activity of the age. The catechetical schools offered a higher education to Christian students than did the catechumenal schools. Their curriculum included philosophy and theology. The most famous of them was at Alexandria. Dr. Bigg considers Athens, Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria the four great university towns under the Empire, with Berytus as containing a law school. It was at one of these intellectual centers, the city of the pupil of Aristotle, ~~"As the strength of the body,"~~ says Locke, ~~"lies chiefly in be-~~ that in 179, the Christians founded their most famous catechetical school. Within its walls, labored the greatest Fathers of the early Church.

Pantaenus, probably the first teacher of Alexandria, was a converted pagan philosopher of the Stoic school. Naturally he tried to adjust his instructions to meet the subtle questionings of Greek thought. When St. Mark, the spiritual son and the

interpreter of St. Peter, had entered this noble, southern capital of the Empire, it could boast of a library which, according to Demetrius of Phaleron, contained not less than 200,000 manuscripts. "To St. Mark, and through him to the Prince of the Apostles, may be traced up every one of those institutions which were the nurseries of the Christian schools."⁴

A late historian does not accept this inference of Miss Drane. At any rate we are safe in maintaining that the catechetical schools of Alexandria were not without an influence on contemporaneous and subsequent teaching in the Church.⁵

Pantaenus is described by St. Jerome as a man "of great prudence and erudition." "Many of his commentaries on Holy Scripture," says he, "are still extant, but his living voice was of still greater benefit to the churches." He also tells us that this Pantaenus, because of his learning, was sent by Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, to preach Christ to the Brahmans and philosophers of India. If this story is true, and St. Jerome is not hastily to be mistrusted, it proves the wisdom of ecclesiastical authorities during the second century in so using scholars to evangelize the learned. Among the early Christian teachers, we find an enthusiasm for erudition surpassed only by their love of Him who is truth and wisdom itself.

In chapter xxxviii, of his *Lives of Illustrious Men*, St. Jerome tells us more of the Alexandrine school. "Clement, presbyter of the Alexandrian church, and a pupil of Pantaenus, mentioned above, led the theological school at Alexandria after the death of his master, and was teacher of the catechetes. Origen is known to have been his disciple." And Origen could claim St. Gregory Thaumaturgus as his pupil, thus making another link in an unusually long chain of distinguished teachers at Alexandria.

St. Clement of Alexandria, one of the earliest of the Greek Fathers, conspicuous for learning, taught for thirteen years. In his *Stromata*, may be found many exquisite reflections on the aim of education, and the benefit of culture for the Christian. Regarding the value of human knowledge, he says: "I

⁴ Drane: *Christian Schools and Scholars*.

⁵ Vide: *The Schools of Medieval England*, by R. F. Leach, pg. 7.

call him truly learned who brings everything to bear on the truth; so that, from geometry, and music, and grammar, and philosophy itself, culling what is useful, he guards the Faith against assault."

"No one understood better than he the emptiness of human learning, when pursued as an end, or its serviceableness when used as a means. His end was to win souls to Christ; and to reach it he laid hands on all the intellectual weapons that fell within his reach, poetry, and philosophy, science, and even satire; he neglected nothing that would serve his turn."⁶

It can not be consistently argued that all this was not a question of education, but of the propagation of Christianity. Even Pestalozzi, whose religion is challenged by both Catholics and Protestants alike, wrote to the benefactors of humanity on behalf of outcast children whom he desired to educate. The tone of his document is little different from the sentiments expressed in St. Clement's *Pedagogue*.

Origen, the illustrious pupil of St. Clement of Alexandria, when but eighteen years old, undertook the work of instructing the catechetes. For many years he thus labored among the scattered churches of Alexandria. He so loved teaching that he sold his cherished library to obtain an income of about twelve cents a day. He was thus enabled to give his services in the lecture hall gratis. He positively refused to accept any remuneration for his pedagogical labors. Looking over the lives of the world's great teachers, we see that penury is the usual lot of both saint and scholar.

Because of the persecution, Origen was forced to leave Alexandria, where seven of his pupils suffered martyrdom under Severus. In 231 he retired to Caesarea, where he again conducted a school. It was here he met St. Gregory Thaumaturgus and his talented brother Athenodorus, who were then studying law in Berytus. That Origen reached the hearts of his converts through their heads is evident from the testimony of his ardent friend and pupil, Gregory. "The profane sciences," wrote Origen, "are to be used so that they may con-

⁶ Drane: *Christian Schools and Scholars*.

tribute to the understanding of the Scriptures; for just as philosophers are accustomed to say that geometry, music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy all dispose to the study of philosophy, so we may say that philosophy, rightly studied, disposes us to the study of Christianity. We are permitted when we go out of Egypt to carry with us the riches of the Egyptians wherewith to adorn the tabernacle; only let us beware how we reverse the process, and leave Israel to go down into Egypt and seek for treasure; that is what Jeroboam did in old times, and what heretics do in our own." In his *Principiis*, we have portrayed the fundamental principles of Christianity. While it is not free from error, it is to be treasured as the first scientific exposition of Catholic doctrine. Like Pantaenus and Dionysius, Origen was a product of the public schools where literature and oratory were of prime importance. He used his secular learning for the education of Christian youth.

The student of education finds in the lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, according to Dr. Gifford, "the first and only complete example of the course of instruction given in the early centuries to the candidates seeking admission to the fuller privileges of the Christian Church." There are twenty-four of these lectures, or catecheses. The first eighteen were addressed to the candidates for Baptism, and the remaining four to the newly baptized. On critical examination, the method of this saintly teacher will satisfy even the most enthusiastic follower of Herbart. If education means eliciting mental development, then St. Cyril of Jerusalem was a real teacher in the true sense of that much abused term. Most of his matter was spiritual and theological. While a modern educationist may regret the absence of secular learning, he must acknowledge that St. Cyril of Jerusalem contributed much toward the culture of the human race. Had he been ignorant of or indifferent to secular learning, his religious teaching would lack that terseness, penetration and dignity by which it is characterized.

Toward the middle of the fourth century we meet St. Basil, archbishop of Caesarea, who more than any other man before him influenced subsequent education. He gave the Church its first religious Rule. He was the center of a group

of Fathers of the Oriental Church who, by their lives and writings, were potent factors in shaping the thought of their contemporaries. His Rule for monks, which still exists in the Greek Church, provides for the instruction of adults and of children of both sexes by the religious. In his *Address to Young Men on the Right Use of Greek Literature*, he has left us an ample proof of his love of learning. His attitude toward what has become known as the humanities, strongly affected Christian education in both East and West during the middle ages and particularly in the Renaissance. So great was his fame as an educator, that the town magistrates urged him to conduct their public school. The following famous passage will show that he approved of making friends of the mammon of iniquity, by culling all that was noblest and best in pagan literature.

“Unto the life eternal the Holy Scriptures lead us, which teach us through divine words. But so long as our immaturity forbids our understanding their deep thought, we exercise our spiritual perceptions upon profane writings, which are not altogether different, and in which we perceive the truth as it were in shadows and in mirrors.”

After condemning what is improper in the poets, he writes: “I have the same words for the historians, especially when they make up stories for the amusement of their hearers. And certainly we shall not follow the example of the rhetoricians in the art of lying. For neither in the courts of justice nor in other business affairs will falsehood be of any help to us Christians, who, by having chosen the straight and true path of life, are forbidden by the Gospel to go to law. But on the other hand, we shall receive gladly those passages in which they praise virtue and condemn vice. For just as bees know how to extract honey from flowers, which to men are agreeable only for their fragrance and color, even so here also those who look for something more than pleasure and enjoyment in such writers may derive profit for their souls. Now, then, altogether after the manner of bees, must we use those writings, for the bees do not visit all the flowers without discrimination, nor indeed do they seek to carry away entire those upon which they light, but rather, having taken so much as is adapted to their

needs, they let the rest go. So we, if wise, shall take from heathen books whatever befits us and is allied to the truth, and shall pass over the rest. And just as in culling roses we avoid the thorns, from such writings as these we will gather everything useful, and guard against the noxious. So, from the very beginning, we must examine each of their teachings, to harmonize it with our ultimate purpose, according to the Doric proverb, 'testing each stone by the measuring line.' "

St. Basil's tragedy, *The Suffering Saviour*, is as truly an exposition of patristic theology, as the *Divina Comedia* is of scholastic doctrine. In it is crystallized the Christian thought of his era.

With St. Basil we naturally associate his holy brother, Gregory of Nyssa, whose early education he superintended. Gregory was a professional rhetorician, and for a time was ardently devoted to pagan culture. Through the influence of St. Basil he was brought back to Christian practices and studies. His writings on dogmatic and exegetical subjects are prolific. To Christian teachers he dedicated his *Oratio Catechetica Magna*, or Great Catechism. It contains forty chapters which abound in instructions to teachers in their labors with converts. In strong, firm lines he delineates the true Christian attitude to pagan culture and philosophy.

St. Basil calls his devoted friend, St. Gregory Nazianzen, "a vessel of election, a deep well, or rather the mouth of Christ." He favored the study of Greek literature, and aimed at using for the service of the Church all the culture and learning of antiquity. Educated Catholics of today may find encouragement in their efforts to maintain freedom of education by reading St. Gregory Nazianzen's *Accusations against Julian*. It is a vigorous protest against the Apostate's legislation prohibiting higher education of Christians. But by no means does it prove that the Christians themselves of this period did not carry on the work of education. Catholics of today, with an educational system extending from kindergarten to university, would make a vehement protest if any government sought to limit or exclude Catholic attendance at public institutions of learning.

At the beginning of the fifth century, as early as 400, we

find St. John Chrysostom, "the golden-mouthed," making similar efforts to keep the education of youth within the fold of the Church. He began his public career as a lawyer. His great oratorical talent, combined with his liberal education, made him eminently successful in the legal profession. But he relinquished the rostrum for an eremitical life near Antioch. Ill health soon forced him to leave his seclusion and return to the city. Shortly after he was ordained, and became preacher in the cathedral at Antioch. It was in 397 that he was named patriarch of Constantinople. He is one of the most voluminous writers of the Eastern Church. We are fortunate in possessing, after the lapse of centuries, seven hundred and twenty-two of his works, of which two hundred and thirty-eight are epistles. His treatise on *The Priesthood*, and *A Defense of Monastic Life*, are of high educational value. In his sermons and letters St. John Chrysostom dwelt long on the necessity of Christian training for youth both at home and in the school.

"If you have masters among you," he writes, "who can answer for the virtue of your children, I should be very far from advocating your sending them to the monastery; on the contrary, I should strongly insist on their remaining where they are. . . . But if no one can give such a guarantee, we ought not to send children to schools where they will learn vice before they learn science, and where in acquiring learning of a relatively small value, they will lose what is far more precious, the integrity of their soul. . . . Are we then to give up literature? you will exclaim. I do not say that; but I do say that we must not kill souls. . . . When the foundations of a building are sapped, we should seek rather for architects to reconstruct the whole edifice, than for artists to adorn the walls. . . . In fact the choice lies between two alternatives: a liberal education, which you may get by sending them to the public schools, or the salvation of their souls, which you secure by sending them to the monks. Which is to gain the day, science or the soul? If you can unite both advantages, do so by all means; but if not, choose the more precious."

When St. Peter moved his episcopal chair from Antioch to Rome, he centered the seat of Christendom in the capital

of the world. He and his followers henceforth had to assimilate Roman customs while they combated Roman vices. The Romans were a military people. It was only three centuries before Christ that they experienced the refining influences of Greek culture. Until then Roman education was purely practical. Its rudiments were learned in the home. Physical exercises held a prominent place in the education of every Roman youth. With the influx of Greek thought private schools were established, and teachers of rhetoric became prominent. But it was not until the second century before Christ that Roman authors appeared.

In 39 B. C. the first Roman library was founded by Asinius Pollio. As early as 60 B. C. there were as many as thirty distinct schools in Rome. During the reign of Vespasian, in the first Christian century, the so-called imperial schools were established not in Rome only, but in some of the large provincial towns of the Empire. Grammar schools followed the wake of the Roman standards, and in the time of Quintilian, an elaborate course of education was available to Roman youth. These schools formed the models for later Christian institutions of learning, especially in England. The nurse, the parents, young slaves, and the *pedagogus*, Quintilian tells us, were the four classes of educators who surrounded the young. Let us notice here the feminine element among these instructors. These nurses and slaves were educated women, so selected that by their correct language, the little child might from the very beginning acquire purity of diction.

During the first years, the primitive Christian availed himself of the Roman public school system. But he soon developed a system of his own, which gave to civilization its most prominent educators. In the West as well as in the East, churchmen influenced Christian thought and culture, by their written and spoken words. Their learning and eloquence rivalled that of the best classical authors. Such for instance was Lactantius Firmianus. He taught rhetoric in Nicomedia before he became a Christian. Some hold that Constantine requested him to undertake the instruction of his son Crispus, an offer which Lactantius had to refuse. He died in poverty at Trier about 330.

St. Ambrose was also a native of Trier. He is known to all as the famous archbishop of Milan, whose learning and eloquence won an Augustine for the Church. His letters, sermons, hymns, and poems, with his numerous treatises, form an important contribution to patristic literature. As an educator, he offers us his *De Officiis Ministrorum*, which is a manual of morality for all Christians. His pure Latinity made him a model in the schools of the Renaissance. St. Jerome tells us that St. Ambrose's treatise on virginity and the duties of consecrated virgins exerted a powerful influence over Christian women in his day.

Our account of education in the primitive Church, short as it is, would not be complete without mention of the famous *Domestica Ecclesia*, Church of the Household, on the Aventine, and the renowned women who graced its halls. Among the most notable of these were Marcella and her mother Albina; Asella, noted for her meekness; Furia, the wealthy heiress of the Camilli; the charitable Fabiola; the zealous Lea and Principia.

"For beauty of character and nobility of purpose and rare mental endowments they recall the best traditions of a Cornelia or a Calpurnia, while so great was their purity of life and so unbounded was their charity to the poor and suffering that they were honored by being numbered among the saints of the early Church. But what specially distinguished them among all the great women of the Roman world was their vast and varied learning. In this respect they were probably far in advance of all their predecessors. For, in addition to a thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek literature, history and philosophy, they had, under the great theologian and orientalist, St. Jerome, become deeply versed in Scripture."

In his letters St. Jerome reveals the influence St. Paula, and her daughters Blesilla, Paula and Eustochium exerted on him while he was translating the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible. By their sympathy and scholarship, as well as by their pecuniary aid, they made his literary labors possible. "Read my book of *Kings*," he asks them, "Read also the Latin and Greek translations and compare them with my version." They read, compared, and criticised. They offered suggestions which the great

scholar incorporated in a subsequently revised copy. We may reasonably believe that the Latin Psalter as it has come down to us, bears the imprint of the scholarship of St. Paula and Eustochium.

St. Paula probably inherited her nobility of character from her parents. By her mother she was related to the Scipios and the Gracchi. Her father, Rogatus, a wealthy citizen of Nicopolis, claimed Agamemnon as one of his ancestors. Through the example of Marcella, St. Paula was led to embrace an ascetic life, and when her daughter Blesilla, after only seven months of wedded happiness, became a widow, she too became deeply spiritual, and consecrated herself to God. Shortly after she died. While mourning her early death, St. Jerome pathetically outlines for us the spiritual and intellectual attainments of his gifted young protégé. "Who," he exclaimed, "will bestow upon mine eyes a spring of tears, that I may weep, not like Jeremiah for the wounded of my people, nor even like Jesus over the sorrows of Jerusalem, but over saintliness and mercy, innocence and chastity, all the virtues laid low in the death of one being. . . . Who could remember unmoved her persistency in prayer, the beauty of her language, the accuracy of her memory and the acuteness of her mind? Had you heard her speak Greek, you would have supposed that she knew no Latin; when she conversed in Latin, no unfamiliarity with that tongue could be detected in her speech. And marvelous gift which the whole of Greece admired in Origen, in a few days she had overcome the difficulties of the Hebrew tongue to such an extent that she vied with her mother in the study and in the singing of the psalms."

Love of Holy Scripture seemed to consume the hearts of these holy, learned women. When chided for his interest in the welfare of women, St. Jerome curtly replied, "If men questioned me more about Scripture, I would speak less to women."

In the study of Greek and Hebrew, Marcella seemed to surpass all her friends on the Aventine. In his commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Jerome wrote of her: "Whenever I picture to myself her ardor for study, her vivacity of mind and her application, I blame my idleness, I who, retreated in this wilderness, with the manger whither the shep-

herds came in haste to adore the wailing Christ-child constantly before mine eyes, am unable to accomplish what a noble woman accomplishes in the hour she snatches from the cares of a large circle, and the government of her household."

When defending himself against unkind criticism St. Jerome grows eloquent in his praise of the intellectual attainments of his faithful friends.

"There are people, O Paula and Eustochium," exclaims the Christian Cicero, "who take offence at seeing your names at the beginning of my works. These people do not know that Olda prophesied when the men were mute; that while Barach was atremble, Deborah saved Israel; that Judith and Esther delivered from supreme peril the children of God. I pass over in silence Anna and Elizabeth and the other holy women of the Gospel, but humble stars when compared with the great luminary, Mary. Shall I speak now of illustrious women among the heathen? Does not Plato have Aspasia speak in his dialogues? Does not Sappho hold the lyre at the same time as Alcaeus and Pindar. Did not Themista philosophize with the sages of Greece? And the mother of the Gracchi, your Cornelia, and the mother of Cato, wife of Brutus, before whom pale the austere virtue of the father and the courage of the husband, are they not the pride of the whole of Rome? I shall add but one word more. Was it not women to whom our Lord first appeared after His Resurrection? Yes, men could then blush for not having sought what the women had found."

St. Jerome's views on education in general, and on feminine education in particular, are outlined in his famous letter to Laeta concerning the rearing of her little daughter Paula:

"Get for her a set of letters made of boxwood or of ivory and call each by its proper name. Let her play with these, so that even her play may teach her something." Then he recommends "a tutor of approved age, and character, and learning; nor will a man of learning blush to do that for a relative or for a noble virgin which Aristotle did for the son of Philip, for whose sake that philosopher condescended to the office of a clerk and instructed him in the first rudiments of knowledge. Small things must not be despised, when great things can not

come to pass without them. The letters themselves, and the first rules of education sound very differently from the mouth of the rustic and the learned."

Latin and Greek he would have Paula acquire by learning daily certain passages from Holy Scripture, for, said he, "if the tender mouth is not properly moulded from the very commencement, the pronunciation will acquire a foreign accent, the faults of which will pass into her native tongue." The Lion of Bethlehem became gentle as a lamb when dealing with this young girl. He would have her taught "the working of wool, to hold the distaff, to place the basket in her lap, to ply the spindle, and draw out the threads." "If you only send Paula," he adds with tender solicitude, "I will undertake the office of her nurse and teacher; I will carry her on my shoulders, as old as I am; I will mould into form her lisping words, much prouder of my office than any worldly philosopher,—training up not a Macedonian king, to die by Babylonian poison, but a hand-maiden and bride of Christ, a fit offering to an everlasting kingdom."

Long years afterward, "it was in Paula's convents, which were likewise schools of theology and language, and in which every one of her religious was obliged to study Scripture, where originated that important occupation of copying manuscripts, which became a universal practice in all the monasteries of succeeding ages—an occupation to which we are indebted for the preservation of the treasures of Greek and Roman letters and science, as well as of the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and an occupation which, when we consider what it has saved for us, was probably one of the most useful which was ever instituted.

"The mind dwells with pleasure on the work accomplished during the mediæval times in the scriptoriums of the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Dominicans, and in those presided over by Hroswitha, St. Hildegard, and the princess-abbess of Whitby, St. Hilda, the inspirer and patroness of Caedmon, who was the precursor by a thousand years of the author of *Paradise Lost*. But when recalling what we owe to these noble institutions, let us not forget that the origin and exemplar of all of them was the one that owed its existence to Paula and

Eustochium in their famous convent in Bethlehem."⁷

Nor were Eustochium and Laeta and Paula singular in their office of teaching. Saints Macrina, Emmelia, Nonna, Anthusa, and Monica, mothers of saints, also carried on this noble work. It is to the prayers of the last that the Church owes one of her most brilliant sons.

All know her great spirituality, but few realize St. Monica's extraordinary mental power and unusual aptitude for philosophy. The scene at Ostia is familiar to many, but none seem to remember the evenings at Cassiciacum, shortly after Augustine's conversion. While he discussed happiness, order, and Platonic error with his friends, "our mother was with us," he tells us. "We had long known her mind and her heart all on fire for the things of God. This we knew by close observation, and continued companionship. But in this disputation which I held with my companions on my birthday about a very important matter, it struck me that her mind was so great as to be as well adapted to the study of philosophy as any one's ever was. Day by day I saw her mind in a new light." Then in astonishment, he exclaims; "Truly, mother, you have stormed the castle of philosophy. You need only the words, and you would express yourself like Cicero himself." "She had uttered these words so surprisingly," he continues, "that we forgot her sex, and thought that some great man had taken his place among us."

Among the philosophers of Greece, one was nicknamed "the mother-taught." A like epithet might be applied to the bishop of Hippo. We are forced to admit that Augustine, the young converted rhetorician, owed much of his own philosophical bent of mind to his mother's teaching, as well as to the mysterious influence of heredity.

The Doctor of Doctors in the Church is Augustine of Hippo. His life story as told in his *Confessions* is one of the classics in universal literature. He brought all the vigor and talent of his trained intellect to the service of religion and education. *The City of God*, begun in 413 and finished in 427, is the ripe fruit of his maturity. It is his principal philosophical work. In it he defends Christian doctrine with the aid of Neo-platonic

⁷ A. H. Johns, M. A.: *Woman's Work in Bible Study and Translation*.

philosophy. If St. Thomas of Aquin baptized Aristotle, St. Augustine of Hippo christianized Plato. His teachings, dogmatic and moral, run like a golden thread through all Catholic theology. It was on the authority of St. Augustine that the trivium and the quadrivium were used by the Christians in education. He considers this curriculum a fitting and sufficient preparation for theological studies. In his second book of *De Christiana Doctrina*, he sets forth his views on the utility of profane science:

"If those who are called philosophers, and especially the Platonists, have aught that is true, and in harmony with our Faith, we are not only not to shrink from it, but to claim it for our own use from those who have unlawful possession of it. For, as the Egyptians had not only the idols and heavy burdens which the people of Israel hated and fled from, but also vessels and ornaments of gold and silver, and garments, which the same people when going out of Egypt, appropriated to themselves, designing them for better use, not doing this on their own authority, but by the command of God, the Egyptians themselves in their ignorance, providing them with things which they themselves were not making a good use of; in the same way all branches of heathen learning have not only false and superstitious fancies and heavy burdens of unnecessary toil, which every one of us, on going out under the leadership of Christ from the fellowship of the heathen, ought to abhor and avoid; but they contain also liberal instruction which is better adapted to the use of the truth, and some most excellent precepts of morality; and some truths in regard to the worship of one God are found among them. Now these are, so to speak, their gold and silver, which they did not create themselves, but dug out of the mines of God's providence, which are everywhere scattered abroad, and are perversely and unlawfully prostituting to the worship of devils. These, therefore, the Christian, when he separates himself from the miserable fellowship of these men, ought to take away from them and devote to their proper use in preaching the Gospel. Their garments also, that is, human institutions such as are adapted to that intercourse with men which is indispensable in this life, we must take and turn to Christian use."

Not the least heritage left to the Church by St. Augustine, is his famous *Rule* for religious. It is one of the four great Rules for monastic Orders, the other three being those of St. Basil, St. Benedict, and St. Francis of Assisi. All these Rules have an educational value not to be overlooked by the student of the history of education. St. Augustine provided for the women as well as for men in his religious instructions. His entire Rule is impregnated with the spirit of mildness and charity. It is the Rule followed in the Church today by many bodies of female religious who carry on the work of education. This Rule was evolved from his famous Letter 211. Even a casual reader will notice the emphasis he places on books, the use of books, the library, and the duties of the librarian, who is "to serve her Sisters mildly and without murmuring. The books are to be asked for at a certain time, and whosoever demands them out of the appointed times shall not have them." All this reveals frequent, intelligent use of a well-stocked library. If reading maketh a full man, we can only infer that the sister of St. Augustine and her followers, for whom the Rule was written, were educated women. And their talent was not to lie hidden in a napkin. It was to be used in such wise that when the Master came, He might reap a large interest.

In all his writings, as Stoeckl expresses it, St. Augustine displays "such depth of thought, such delicacy of discrimination, a spirit of inquiry so fruitful in results, such a genuine appreciation of the ideal, such conclusive reasoning, as are not often found in one man to the same degree. God and the soul—these were the objects to which his investigations were chiefly directed; the whole effort of his mind found expression in the pregnant words *Noverim Te, noverim me.*"

With St. Augustine's death in 430, we close what may be regarded as the patristic era of Christian education. From the beginning, the Church found a strong ally in women for this noble work. It was woman who formed the children, ruled the youth, and influenced the men who shaped the destiny of the world. In her hand she ever held aloft the torch of learning, leading minds on to that vaster, deeper knowledge which sprang forth so abundantly in succeeding generations.

CHAPTER II

POST-NICENE EDUCATION

St. Augustine of Hippo, dying on the very eve of the sacking of his episcopal see by the Vandals, was spared the great sorrow of witnessing the ruin of most of the civilization of the four preceding centuries. But the lamp of learning was not long extinguished. The sixth century forms a link between the patristic period and the early medieval age. Men rose up who did much for the education of their contemporaries, and left a lasting mark on succeeding generations. Prominent among these was Anicius Severinus Boëthius, who is often called "the last of the Romans." Born in Rome about 480, of patrician parents, he became a famous statesman. As early as 507 he was regarded for his learning. He was educated by the saintly, noble-souled Symmachus, whose daughter Rusticiana he married. The Ostrogothic king Theodoric held him so highly that several important missions were entrusted to him. But he was afterwards accused of treason, cast into prison, and, without trial, condemned to death. He died at Pavia in 525. While in confinement, he seriously reflected on the inconstancy of friends and worldly position. These considerations he has immortalized in his famous work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

This world-wide classic is the greatest piece of prison literature in existence. It is purely philosophical, and bears no traces of Christian influence. The latter characteristic has made some doubt that Boëthius was a Christian. It has been proved that he was, but so philosophical was his mind, that he drew a firm line between the natural and the supernatural in the world of thought. Whether he was a martyr for the faith or not, is an open question. His great work was widely read during the middle ages, and bears the distinction of having been translated into Anglo-Saxon by Alfred the Great. Its influences may be traced in Beowulf and Chaucer, and even in Dante.

To Boëthius medieval philosophy owed much of its knowledge of Aristotle and his terminations. He gave us also two books of Euclid's geometry.

This same century witnessed too the rise of monasticism in the West. As every student of history knows, the monks have done more for the civilization of Europe in general, and of England in particular, than any other society of men. Although the cenobitic life existed in the East as early as Apostolic days, it was reserved for Benedict the Great to permanently establish it in the West. He belonged to the influential house of Anicius, and was born about 480. Ruskin calls his birth the most important date in medieval history. After many unusual spiritual experiences, St. Benedict founded his first community at Subiaco, about fifty miles to the west of Rome. Toward 529 he was obliged to leave this neighborhood, and went to Monte Cassino, where he established his famous monastery, which was destined to become the Benedictine capital. It was probably here that he wrote his Rule in the year 539. In the initial phrases of this Rule, the saint proposes to open a school in which the science of salvation shall be taught, and, with his closing words, he wishes the monks to reach the summit of learning and sanctity. It is interesting to note that although the seventy-three chapters of this Rule were written for men who did not aspire to the priesthood, St. Benedict insists that two hours shall be spent daily in reading. This clause is the cue to those vast literary labors which characterize Benedictine scholarship throughout the ages.

When St. Benedict founded his great Order, he had associated with him his devoted sister, St. Scholastica. From her earliest youth she consecrated herself to God. We do not know where her first monastery was. But when St. Benedict moved to Monte Cassino, she settled at Plombariola, about five miles distant. Here she founded and governed a convent of nuns. St. Gregory the Great says that St. Benedict governed nuns as well as monks. It is not known whether St. Benedict wrote for them a separate Rule, or whether they adopted with necessary changes, what he had given to the monks. But it is certain that from the earliest days, Benedictine monasteries for women have existed side by side with those for men. And their labors were not dissimilar.

A new impetus was given to monastic energy with the coming of Cassiodorus. He was born in 490 of a Syrian family

then residing in Italy. Like Boëthius, he attained a high position in the political life of Rome. He soon gave up his public career to found a monastery on his own estate at Vivarium. There he became a monk. Besides governing this monastery and guiding the intellectual labors of many contemporaries, he found time to write his *De Artibus et Disciplinis Liberalium Litterarum*, a treatise on the liberal arts, which blends Christian and pagan culture.

"In founding his monastery, Cassiodorus' principal aim was to provide an asylum for the humanities in a barbarous and destructive age—to establish a school of learning in which the sacred, patristic, and classical writings might be carefully studied, transcribed, and preserved. To him the ideal monk was a student, primarily of divine wisdom, but also of the productions of human genius. 'For by the study of secular literature,' he said, 'our minds are trained to understand the Scriptures themselves.' Hence, with indescribable pains, and at great cost, Cassiodorus collected what must have been in those days, an exceptionally large and varied library, containing manuscripts suited to the requirements of every class of students. For the theologians, were provided, in addition to carefully collated copies of the Scriptures, the writings of the Latin Fathers, and the best works of the Easterns, either translated or else in the original Greek. For the grammarians, there were 'the illustrious poets and orators,' the study of whom Cassiodorus hoped would refine the style of his monks, as well as widen their intellectual outlook. For scholars who were interested in other branches of learning, the capacious cupboards of the library contained the best books extant on their several subjects, whether it was history, geography, music or scientific agriculture. . . . Enthusiastic as he was in the collection of manuscripts, Cassiodorus was no less anxious for their propagation by transcription. 'Of all the works that can be accomplished by manual labor,' he writes, 'none pleases me so much as the work of the copyist—if only they will copy correctly.' To secure uniformity and accuracy in the transcription, Cassiodorus compiled from the precepts of ten grammarians, a treatise on orthography, and commended it to the careful perusal of the 'antiquarii'. . . . But though Cassiodorus hoped

to make his monastery pre-eminently a home of sound learning, he was not so pedantic as to suppose that all who dwelt in it would take kindly to study. He arranged, therefore, that other employments should be provided for those who were unable or unwilling to engage in purely intellectual pursuits. . . . Yet Cassiodorus was the first man in Italy to recognize the possibilities of the convent as a school of liberal culture. He opened out for the Italian religious an entirely new sphere of activity."⁸

Speaking of the state of Europe from the fifth to the ninth century, the learned historian Guizot says: "Pressed on the south by the Mohametans, on the north by the Germans and the Slavonic tribes, it was scarcely possible that the reaction of this double invasion should do other than hold the interior of Europe in continual disorder. The populations were constantly being displaced, and forced one upon the other. Nothing of a fixed character could be established; the wandering life commenced on all sides. There was no doubt, some difference in this respect, in the different states: the chaos was greater in Germany than in the rest of Europe, Germany being the focus of the movement; France was more agitated than Italy. But in no place could society settle or regulate itself."

In the midst of all this turmoil and chaos, "the Church was a society regularly constituted, having its principles, its rules, and its discipline, and experiencing an ardent desire to extend its influence and conquer its conquerors. Among the Christians of the period, among the Christian clergy, there were men who had thought upon all moral and political questions, who had decided opinions, and energetic sentiments upon all subjects, and a vivid desire to propagate and give them empire. Never has any other society made such efforts to influence the surrounding world, and to stamp thereon its own likeness, as were made by the Christian Church between the fifth and the tenth centuries."⁹

St. Gregory the Great occupied the papal throne from 590 until 604. They were fourteen momentous years in the history

⁸ Dudden: *Life of Gregory the Great*.

⁹ Guizot: *History of Civilization in Europe*.

of the Church and European culture. He was a wealthy Roman nobleman who, giving up his property on the Coelian for a monastery, became a Benedictine monk within its walls. The migration of nations had set in. Society was in a fluid state. It was the opportune moment for his apostolic soul. Although he did not leave the Eternal City, he ranks as one of the Church's greatest missionaries, for through his efforts, England was won to Christianity. The story of that Anglo-Saxon conversion we shall dwell on later. Suffice to say now that:

"It was precisely when Christianity thus began to receive the unquestioning allegiance of the Latin race, that a new field of conquest opened up before it amid the Teutonic nations. The records of that conquest, although checquered with much that is melancholy and repulsive, still form undoubtedly one of the most glorious chapters in the history of the Church. As the thought and literature of subjugated Greece had led captive the conquering Roman, so the religion and culture of Christian Rome subdued the strong will and overthrew the gods of the victorious Teuton. The days of the decline of the Roman power were indeed, as has been truly said, the days of its greatest conquests; the victories gained on the Metaurus, at Pydna, and on the Halys, shine with but an evanescent luster when compared with those won by the Faith, the laws, the institutions of Christian Rome."¹⁰

As a religious and an educator, the first Gregory was most solicitous for the propagation of learning. He has been unjustly charged with being the adversary of liberal studies. But his own writings exonerate him. In one of his commentaries on Holy Scripture, he says, "Learning drawn from secular studies although not directly useful in spiritual combat, still if it be joined to sacred studies, greatly helps to the understanding of those studies. . . . The wicked spirits take away from some the desire of learning, so that they have no knowledge of profane literature, and never reach the height of sacred studies. . . . Ignorant of profane knowledge, we can not penetrate the depths of sacred learning. . . . A mind untrained

¹⁰ Mullinger: *The Schools of Charles the Great.*

can not lance the tumors of vice, because it can not see what has to be pierced."

His *Magna Moralia*, or the *Morals of Job*, is really a treatise on moral theology, and was worthy of becoming through all the middle ages the text book of that theology. In the *Regula Pastoralis*, he sets forth the duties of a bishop. It has been said that it was the book that made the bishops who made the modern nations. The *Dialogues*, written in July, 593, were the delight of our forefathers. King Alfred the Great ordered Werefrith, bishop of Worcester, to translate them into Anglo-Saxon. These Dialogues afford us an insight into the social life of the period in which they were written. Their author has devoted the whole of the second book to the life of his beloved father, St. Benedict.

The Roman Breviary has been greatly enriched by many of the Homilies of St. Gregory the Great, while eight hundred and fifty of his letters have come down to us. "The time of Gregory the Great," says Dean Milman, "was the time in which the human mind was finally christianized."

In the next century, St. Isidore, who died in 636, established many schools and educational institutions. He was educated by his brother Leander, and finally became bishop of Seville. A monument to the universality of his knowledge is his *Etymologiarum libri xx*. It is really a dictionary, or rather an encyclopedia, of knowledge at his time. For centuries after its appearance it was used as a source book of information. It is interesting to note that he compiled also a useful dictionary of words and synonyms.

"A fertile writer, unwearied and profoundly learned, he wrote, among many other works, a history of the Goths, their conquests and government in Spain. He made Aristotle known to the new nations of the West long before the Arabs came to bring him again into fashion. He has preserved to us a multitude of classical fragments which, without his care, would have perished forever. . . . He was besides the compiler of that Spanish liturgy so poetic and imposing, which, under the name of Mozarabic, survived the ruin of the Visigoth church, and was worthy of being resuscitated by the great Ximenes. It has been said of him with justice that he was the last philosopher of the ancient world, and the first Christian who arranged for

Christians the knowledge of Antiquity.”¹¹

When Christianity was firmly established in the British Isles, the missionaries brought with them as a rich legacy from Rome, the art, literature, and science of the human race, which had flourished for nigh six centuries under the fostering care of the Catholic Church.

¹¹ Montalembert: *Monks of the West*, Vol. I.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN

While culture and civilization were progressing in the south of Europe, the northern climes were about to receive the light of Faith.

The rise and progress of civilization in the British Isles is a story whose beginning is shrouded in mystery. The account of the Roman conquest is familiar to all. On August 25th, fifty-five years before Christ, Caesar landed eighty galleys on the coast of Kent. With these he hoped to conquer Britain. Completely separated as it was from the mainland of Europe, he thought he was discovering a new world. This first attempt proving unsuccessful, he made another landing the following year. This time the Roman troops reached the interior. Caesar himself has described the conquest of Britain. Its inhabitants agreed to pay a yearly tribute to Rome, and thus satisfied the mercenary ambition of their conquerors.

The Roman legions found the Britons strong in their fortresses and ardent in their Druidism. The forests were their temples, the branches of the sacred oak their altars. The complete subjection of the country was slow. One hundred years after Caesar, we find Claudius entering Britain with a large army. He thoroughly conquered the country. The Druids had taken refuge in Mona, of Anglesea. Here Suetonius, the Roman governor of the island, attacked them. While he was on this expedition, the queen of the Iceni headed an insurrection in the eastern province. She was Boadicea, who thus tried to avenge the wrongs she and her daughters had suffered at the hands of the enemy when her husband had been killed. Suetonius did not conquer her until he had lost nearly all his own troops and killed 800 000 Britons. She is a striking type of the dauntless courage of English women.

When Julius Agricola became governor of Britain, Roman civilization was introduced into the island. In the year 78 A. D., Roman villas, baths and temples appeared where only rude tents had been before. Good roads were constructed. Commercial intercourse with Rome and her colonies was established.

Roman laws, customs and religion took root among this people who were destined to become the empire builders of the world.

Shortly after the advent of the Roman eagles into Britain came the Cross of Christ. That was the inestimable blessing which the Roman conquest brought to the island. The exact date of the introduction of Christianity into Britain is unknown. Pious tradition tells us St. Joseph of Arimathea made Glastonbury the first Christian settlement. Others say St. Paul himself landed on British soil, and preached the Gospel to the farthermost western isles.

These may be mythical legends, but we have historical evidence that several Britons residing in Rome in Apostolic times, embraced Christianity. In his second Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul says, "Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia." This Claudia, the wife of Pudens, was the daughter of the sturdy British king, Caractacus. He was residing in Rome at this time. His father, "Bran the Blessed," had embraced the Faith, and became one of the first apostles of the Welsh.

It is interesting to note that the titular church of England's present Cardinal Bourne, is Santa Pudenziana in Rome. It is built on the site of the home of Pudens and Claudia. They with their children, Pudentiana, Proxedes, Timotheus, and Novatus, were frequently the hosts of St. Peter. Their house was "the place where Peter baptized".

Pomponia Graecina was the wife of Aulus Plautius, and a noble British woman who graced Roman society at this time. Tacitus relates that his wife Pomponia, was accused of embracing "a foreign superstition". Although she was exonerated and declared innocent by her husband, it is plain she was suspected of being a Christian.

In the course of years, intercourse between England and her eastern neighbors became very close. As early as the second century, Tertullian could assert that "parts of Britain not reached by the Romans had become subject to Christ."

"There is indirect and outside evidence that Christianity had penetrated Britain at the end of the second century. The evidence is patristic in its source, and general in its character. Tertullian writing, c. 208, speaks of places in Britain inaccessible

to the Romans, yet subject to Christ; and Origen writing about thirty years later, refers in two passages to the British people having come under the influence of Christianity. But how did they so come? In the absence of precise information, the most probable supposition is that Christianity came through Gaul, between which country and Britain commercial intercourse was active. There may also have been individual Christians among the Roman soldiers who were then stationed in Britain. In fact, the almost universally Latin, or at least non-Celtic names of such British martyrs, bishops, etc., as have been preserved, point to a preponderating Roman rather than Celtic element in the British Church; though against this it must also be remembered that, as in the cases of Patricius and Pelagius, the names known to us may be assumed Christian names superseding some earlier Celtic names, of which in most cases no record has come down. Possibly the British Church consisted at first of converts to Christianity among the Roman invaders, and of such natives as came into immediate contact with them, and the native element only gradually gained ground when the Roman troops were withdrawn.

"The known facts are too few for a continuous British Church history to be built upon. The only early British historian, Gildas, c. 540, is the author of a diatribe rather than a history."¹²

The persecution of Diocletian gave to the Church her first British martyr in the person of St. Alban. He was put to death because he sheltered a Christian priest named Amphibalus. Bede describes Verulam, the place of his martyrdom, "as worthy from its loveliness to be the scene of a martyr's sufferings." After the triumph of Constantine, whom some historians claim to be of British birth, Christianity spread rapidly in Britain. In several of the early Synods and Councils of the Church, British bishops took part. Their communion with the Church of Rome was intimate, their intercourse with the Apostolic See frequent.

In the year 431, Pope Celestine sent Palladius, a deacon, to preach among the natives of Ireland. Many of them were

¹² *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol II.

already Christians. He then passed into northern Britain to carry the Good Tidings to its natives. This section of the country was at that time called Scotland. Here he preached for many years. He was their first bishop, and died about 450, near the present site of Aberdeen.

Although the light of the true Faith had reached Ireland before the advent of her famous Apostle, it was not until the coming of St. Patrick that any appreciable conversions were made on the island. Ireland had never felt the tread of the Roman heel. St. Patrick worked with virgin soil and with virgin souls. In 465, after thirty-three years of apostolic labor, he left Ireland a thoroughly Christian nation. This is the one instance in all history of an entire people being converted by moral suasion alone. Not a single drop of blood was ever shed on Irish soil to pay a toll to paganism. The ardent, generous, enthusiastic Celtic nature readily responded to the noble teachings of Christianity. Women as well as men flocked in large numbers to St. Patrick to hear his message.

The name of Patrick is indissolubly united with that of Brigid. With him she labored in the spreading of the Gospel. He taught her the ways of God, which she in turn shared with other pious souls. Thus originated the first Irish religious Community, which settled at Kildare with St. Brigid as its abbess. Many other convents trace their origin to her. What was their Rule of life? What their system of government? Evidently, their Rule came directly from St. Patrick. "The spirit breatheth where it will."

But it is surmised by more than one eminent historian that St. Patrick was himself an Augustinian monk, and established the Rule of St. Augustine in all monasteries founded in Ireland during his lifetime. The Irish convents were noted, not alone for their religious fervor typified by their perpetual chanting of the divine praises, but also for their passionate love of learning, both sacred and profane. The Celtic mind is naturally drawn toward speculation. Brilliant Erigena is as truly a type of Celtic culture as plodding Alcuin is of Anglo-Saxon learning.

The Celt spontaneously responds to the missionary precept of Christ. It was probably less in a spirit of penance for his share in the battle of Cuilreimhue, than with the set purpose

"to preach the Gospel to the men of Alba and to the Britons and to the Saxons," that in 563, the intrepid St. Columba crossed from Ireland, with a few companions, and first touched British soil. It was May 12, Whitsun Eve, when he landed on the beautiful Isle of Iona. Here he founded a monastery which became one of the most famous seats of learning in the whole world. Within its thatch-roofed walls Gaelic, Greek, Latin and Hebrew were ordinarily spoken. Iona, "the light of all the North," gave special study to Holy Scripture, literature, and all sacred subjects. From Iona went St. Aidan, Finan and Colman to rule Lindisfarne, the centre of learning in Northumbria.

Columba's prophecy was fulfilled to the letter: "Small and mean though the place is, it shall yet be held in great and universal honor, not only by the kings of the Scots and their people, but also by the rulers of foreign and barbarous nations, and their subjects." St. Columba himself has no fewer than 300 books to his credit. The story of his infringement of primitive copyright laws is purely legendary, but reveals his literary talents. He who spent with his companions the last thirty-four years of his life in voluntary exile—*peregrinari pro Christo*—"preferred death in faultless Erin to life forever in Albyn." Britain's debt to Ireland is increased by the zeal of St. Fursey in East Anglia. He built a monastery at Burgh Castle in Suffolk. It was from Scottish missionaries also that the Mercians and Middle Anglians received the Faith.

Even in those pioneer days of the Faith in Ireland, we find traces of the Celtic love of adventure. The sons of Erin longed to spread the teachings of Christ. The good seed they scattered far and wide until it reached distant Gaul and Italy in the person of St. Columbanus. When barely thirty, he left Bangor with only twelve companions, crossed Great Britain, and entered Gaul. For some years he preached among the people, and finally in 590, he established his celebrated monastery in Luxeuil. Here at the foot of the Vosges, rose three monasteries in succession, peopled with hundreds of monks. He taught them the interior life, and governed with that discretion characteristic of Celtic mysticism. Besançon and Orleans were in turn the scene of his labors. Columbanus finally crossed the Alps, entered Lombardy, and at Bobbio founded his last monastery. It

was here he so valiantly fought Arianism and preached the supremacy of the See of Rome.

The followers of Columbanus dotted the whole of France with their monasteries. These monks had come from Ireland and Rome, and it was they who Christianized northern Britain.

"We have little information concerning the origins of monachism in the Celtic lands, though the system played a prominent part in the Christianizing of most of them. It seems that the earliest Celtic monasteries were missionary stations, closely connected with the tribal system. St. Patrick, who had passed some years as a monk in Lerins, built up the Irish Church in large measure on a monastic framework, and this initial tendency became more and more accentuated, till the bishops came to be subordinated to the abbots of the great monasteries. Our first definite knowledge of an organized cenobitical life in Ireland comes to us from the sixth century, during the course of which several great monasteries were established in various parts of the island, some of them counting more than a thousand monks. But any full knowledge of early Irish monachism has to be gathered, not on Irish soil, but from the documents connected with St. Columba, who toward the end of the sixth century established a great monastery in the island of Iona or Hy, the missionary influence whereof spread over southern Scotland and northern England; and from the documents connected with St. Columbanus, who early in the seventh century founded a number of Irish monasteries in Central Europe. St. Columbanus' Rule is the only Irish monastic rule, properly so called, that has come down to us from the early period of Irish monachism; it was not composed in Ireland, but undoubtedly it embodies the Irish traditions of monasticism and ascetical discipline."¹³

That the Faith established by the Celtic missionaries was both Catholic and Roman, has been proved beyond dispute by Professor Bury, of Trinity College.

As early as the fourth century, Christianity had a strong hold in Britain. In 401, Roman forces were withdrawn from the country to protect the Empire in Italy and Thrace against

¹³ *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. I.

invasions on the north. By 410, within the short space of a decade of years, traces of Roman civilization had disappeared. Then the Britons were exposed to incursions from the Picts. These were soon followed by a Teuton conquest which was destined to influence strongly the future history of the island.

The Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were true pagans. They sacked churches. They destroyed every vestige of Christianity. The natives were steadily driven westward, until only Wales was distinctly British and Christian, for it was to these western parts that priests and bishops fled to escape Teuton cruelty.

The conquest of England by these tribes from the Baltic shores is the only instance in all history where a foreign foe completely assimilated the native population. England too offers us the rare case of a people once Christianized lapsing again into paganism. The unconquered Britons of the West made no effort to convert the invaders.

It was in 597, that Gregory the Great sent St. Augustine to England to convert these "angels of the north". Augustine landed at Kent, and soon baptized Ethelbert, who had married a Christian, Bertha, daughter of Charibert I, king of Paris. When Augustine and his forty companions left the Benedictine monastery on the Coelian, they passed through France on their way to England. There they heard so many discouraging tales of the Angles, that they determined to return to the Pope and tell him their difficulties. He reminded them "it was better not to begin good works than to leave them off when once started." So they recommenced their journey, this time taking with them Frankish priests to act as interpreters.

Thousands followed Ethelbert into the Church. Augustine then crossed over into France, and was consecrated bishop by Virgilius of Arles, the Pope's vicar in Gaul. Augustine wrote a full account of all his doings to Pope Gregory, who replied with thanks to God. He also sent to England a fresh supply of Benedictine monks. They gladly became the co-laborers of St. Augustine. From Rome Gregory forwarded to his favored disciples a supply of everything needed for divine worship, and "very many books". "Many of these were works of great beauty. Medieval pilgrims who visited the abbey (at Canterbury) saw there the *Biblia Gregoriana*, written upon rose-colored

leaves, showing strange reflections in the light. On a shelf above and behind the high altar, surrounded by reliquaries of every shape, were placed psalters, acts of the Martyrs, and books of the Gospels, bound in chased silver and mounted with beryls and crystals—all presents from the great Pope. It is not impossible that these books—these *primitiae librorum*—survived even until the so-called Reformation. The library of Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, and the Bodleian Library at Oxford possess two ancient books of the Gospels, said to have formed part of St. Gregory's gift."

"St. Augustine and his monks brought the Benedictine Rule into England, and their monastery of SS. Peter and Paul (later St. Augustine's) in Canterbury, established about 600, was the first Benedictine monastery outside of Italy of which authentic record exists. And it was in England that the first great Benedictine developments took place. This was not only in Kent, where the original foundation found great impetus from Archbishop Theodore, himself a Greek, and Abbot Adrian sent with him by the Pope, an African monk, clearly a Benedictine trained no doubt in Rome (669); but also in the northern parts of the country, where it was introduced in the second half of the seventh century, by Wilfrid at Ripon, and by Benet Biscop at Wearmouth and Jarrow, both having learned the practice of the Benedictine Rule and life not only in Kent, but also during their travels abroad, at Rome and elsewhere. By 700, the Benedictine Rule was followed universally throughout the Saxon parts of England, but not yet in the British and Celtic parts."¹⁴

Mabillon gives the year 620 as beginning the change among the monasteries of Celtic and Cassian spirit to the Benedictine Rule. Its mild form of government, prudence, and firmness of tone made St. Benedict's Rule universally adopted throughout the Roman Church less than a century and a half after the great legislator drew it up.

Reviewing the conversion of England, we see that Kent was converted exclusively by Roman missionaries. Essex, Wessex and East-Anglia yielded to the efforts of continental and Celtic monks, while Northumbria and Mercia were influenced by

¹⁴ Rev. C. Butler, O. S. B.: *Benedictine Monachism*.

Celtic missionaries. The new Faith in the brief period of sixty years completely changed the life and the habits of the nation. This was truly a bloodless revolution. In many cases the new religion was discussed in the "Council of the Wise," (Witenagemot) and accepted by the nobles and the heads of families. Numerous baptisms followed, but with full freedom to the individual. Monasteries were erected on every side. They became mission centers whose preachers went forth to convert the country and to mould its worship. The historian, John R. Green, beautifully describes the changes wrought by Catholic Christianity in the individual life of the Britons. From the cradle to the grave it forced on the Englishman a new law of conduct, new habits, new occupations of life and society. It penetrated into the sphere of the home. It curtailed man's powers over child and wife and slave. It forbade infanticide. It controlled sexual intercourse. It prohibited cruelty to the serf. It denied to the king his heritage of the blood of the gods. It regarded slavery as a wrong, war as an evil, manual labor as a virtue. It extinguished feuds by denouncing revenge. It considered gluttony and drunkenness sinful. It claimed to control every circumstance of life. It changed labor customs by the prohibition of toil on Sundays and holydays. It forced on a barbarous community, to which bodily joys were dear, long and painful fasts.

The Anglo-Saxon Church was characterized by purity of doctrine and intimate union with Rome. National devotion to "Our Lady St. Mary," earned for England the name of "Mary's Dowry". Devotion to St. Peter was general. The very name of Rome seemed to lure churchmen and laymen, bishops and kings to frequent pilgrimages to the tomb of the Apostle. Anglo-Saxon England stands unique in history for the number of its royal saints, kings and queens. Ethelbert of Kent, Edwin and Oswald of Northumbria, Oswine of Deira, Sebba of Essex, Ethelred of Mercia, Ina of Wessex, and many others are honored with the aureola of sainthood. No fewer than twenty-six English kings and queens relinquished the pomp of royalty for the poverty of the cloister. Ninety years after the coming of St. Augustine, England had given three hundred saints to the Church.

No wonder the learned Dr. Maitland confessed: "There is no subject in the history of mankind which appears to me more interesting and more worthy of investigation, than the actual state of the Christian Church during the dark ages."

It is worthy of note that most of the women who are honored as saints in England belong to the first hundred years after the introduction of Christianity into the island. Several other women who have been revered as saints in England lived in the tenth century. They came under the influence of the monastic revival which is associated with the name of St. Dunstan. But no woman living during Anglo-Norman times has been thus honored. The desire to raise women to saintship was essentially Anglo-Saxon. It was strongest in the times which immediately followed the advent of Christianity.

The monks did for the formation of the Church in England what the bishops did for France.

It may be well to glance here at the chief changes from the social and political point of view which each tribe underwent as soon as its leaders embraced Christianity. The most far-reaching change of all, next to the introduction of a higher moral standard, is clearly the rise in each kingdom of a small lettered class who could read and write. They had some knowledge of Mediterranean civilization. The English of all ranks, as pagans, must have lived without writing. We know they were acquainted with the Runic alphabet, and used it for mottoes on weapons and coins, for recording names on gravestones, and now and then for secret messages. Still this method of writing was altogether useless for the ordinary needs of civilization. There may have been a few court bards who were capable of reading messages for the kings in the Roman alphabet. But the ordinary chief was ignorant of writing. He recorded nothing. Everything that needed to be remembered had to be put in the form of rhythmic verses, suitable for chanting to the harp. Laws and customs of the tribes were handed down orally in this manner. With the advent of Christianity all began to change. Wherever the missionaries went, they brought the Roman alphabet with them. They were ready to write down and record. At first of course, this was done in Latin. But after a few years, the vernacular also was used not only for ac-

counts of important deeds, but for every-day bargains and contracts. The new learning was meagre, the class of writers small, but a new epoch had begun. A book no longer meant a tablet of beechwood. It became a book of parchment. A new factor toward social progress was now at work.¹⁵

The Benedictine monks who wrought this change rose early in the morning—usually about two o'clock. The hour of rising changed with the season. They had however an ample period of unbroken sleep, usually not less than eight hours. The midnight Office between two periods of sleep was a common feature of later monasticism in the West. It had no place in Benedictine life as planned by St. Benedict. The monks went to the church for the night Office. This consisted of fourteen psalms and certain readings from Holy Scripture. It was chanted, and probably took from an hour to an hour and a half. It was followed by a break which varied from a few minutes in the summer to a couple of hours in mid-winter, and which was devoted to private reading of Scripture, or prayer. The matin Office, now called Lauds, was recited at dawn, and Prime at sunrise. Each occupied about half an hour. Prime was followed by work, field work for most of the monks, or reading, according to the season of the year. These exercises filled up the time until dinner, which was at twelve or at three. Terce, Sext and None were sung in the church at the appropriate time. In summer when the night sleep was short, the usual Italian siesta was allowed after dinner. The afternoon was passed in work and reading, like the morning. Vespers was sung before sunset. In the summer it was followed by an evening meal. Before dark, while it was yet light enough to read, the monks once more assembled in the church. After a few pages had been read, Compline was said. Then they retired in the dusk before there was need of an artificial light. On Sundays there was no work. The time assigned to spiritual exercises and to reading had to be lengthened.

According to St. Benedict's ideal, work notably occupied more time daily than either the church services or reading. This

¹⁵ Vide: *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II.

work was manual, in the fields or garden, or about the house. The element of work was intended to be an integral part of the monastic life. It was not a mere occupation, but a very real factor in the service of God. Six or seven hours were devoted to it daily. The casual reader may think that the long hours of manual labor, the unbroken fast until mid-day, or even until sunset during lent, and the perpetual abstinence from flesh meat, made a life in the Benedictine monastery one of great austerity. We must remember that though scions of patrician families were to be found in the convents, still the vast majority of the community was recruited from the ranks of the peasantry. Neither the fasting nor the abstinence from meat would appear to European peasants of today, and still less in the sixth century, so great a tax as they do to us.

The other exercise of the monks, outside the worship of God, was reading. To it from three to five hours were assigned daily, according to the season. It is beyond doubt that the reading was largely devotional, confined to the Bible and the writings of the Fathers. St. Basil and Cassian were especially recommended. Thus were germinated those works of erudition and of historical science with which the Benedictine name in later ages became associated.

But the chief function of the monk was in St. Benedict's eyes, neither agricultural work nor literary labor. All the services of Benedictines to civilization and to education and to letters have been by-products. Their primary and essential duty is what St. Benedict calls "the Work of God"—the *Opus Dei*. It was the daily chanting of the canonical Office in the choir. This work was to be preferred before all others, and this principle has been the keynote of Benedictine life throughout the ages.¹⁶

The life of the Benedictine nuns was the same as the life of the Benedictine monks, necessary changes being allowed for their sex. It was the life led by most of the nuns in Anglo-Saxon times.

No man did so much to propagate Benedictine culture as did Pope Gregory I. Through his efforts the Order took roots in

¹⁶ Vide: *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. I.

Anglo-Saxon England, though he was not destined to see the fruits of his labors.

"In June, 603, the long agony with which the great Pope had struggled came to an end. The Romans to whom he had devoted his life paid no immediate honor to his memory; but a legend in later days, based perhaps on a statement of his archdeacon Peter, attributed to him a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and gave rise to his representations in art with a dove hovering over his head. His enormous energy had bequeathed to the Church a mass of writings which placed him among her four great doctors and exercised a powerful influence on the theology of the following centuries. For long Gregory was regarded as the great Christian philosopher and moralist, the interpreter of Holy Scripture, the teacher of the rulers of the Church. His sermons, his music, his dogmatic theology, and his method of interpretation were for long the models which the Western Church followed unquestioningly. But the historical importance of his life would be as great as it is had he never written a single theological treatise. The influence of

his career came from his own personal character, the intense power of the active Christianity which radiated from his sick bed as from his throne.

"Gregory emerges from the darkness of his age as a figure whom men can plainly see. His letters reveal him as few other heroes of the Middle Age are revealed: hardly any great ecclesiastics save Bernard and Becket are so intimately known. We recognize him as a stern Roman, hating the barbarians as unclean, despising the Greeks as unworthy of their share in the Empire which had sheltered them with its name. He was a passionate advocate of justice between man and man, a guardian of men's rights, a governor set to repress wrong, and to preserve the stability of the ancient State. He was eminently practical, as a builder, an administrator, a philanthropist, and a patriot. No doubt his fame is due partly to the weakness of his predecessors in the Papacy and partly to the insignificance and wickedness that followed. But his fame is due still more to the real achievement of his life. He gave to the Papacy a policy and a position which were never abandoned or lost. . . .

All over the Christian world Gregory had taught men to look to the Pope as one who could make peace and ensue it. On this foundation the medieval Papacy was founded. Not long was it contented so to rest."¹⁷

The five centuries between St. Gregory and St. Anselm may be called the Benedictine period. It was a transitional stage of intellectual culture for the human race, a connecting link between patristic and scholastic education. From the time of Cassiodorus, intellectual labor occupied a large part of the life of a Benedictine religious.

"Agriculture passed out of use as the ordinary work of monks in the course of the eighth century, when they had become priests. A good substitute for manual labor was then found in the copying of books all through the Middle Ages, until the invention of printing. It was much exercised by the monks, and had all the qualities of monastic work: it was definitely manual labor; it was compatible with the tenor of the monastic life; it was laborious, painful, exacting, unexciting; it was a valuable contribution to the work of the world."

Religious men and women did the printers' work. It had been the usual occupation of the cloister from the first ages of the Church. St. John Chrysostom says that in his days the usual occupation of monks was "to sing, to pray, to read Scripture, and to transcribe the Sacred Text." In transcribing they used a running hand. It is said that from the English monks was derived the small letter of the modern Roman type.

In the British Isles, as on the continent, monasteries for women were erected simultaneously with those for men.

"Communities of women existed at an earlier date than communities of men—in Egypt as early as the middle of the third century. The records of Egyptian monachism agree in representing women as taking part in great numbers in every phase of the monastic movement. There were women who lived as hermits and as recluses, shut up in tombs; there are various stories of women disguising themselves as men and living in monasteries, and being discovered only after death. Pachomius founded two nunneries, one under his sister, at Tabennisi, the

¹⁷ *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II.

other, which numbered 400 nuns, near Panopolis. We learn from Palladius that at the end of the fourth century, there were numerous nunneries in all parts of monastic Egypt, and the glimpses he lets us see of their inner life are graphic and interesting. He tells us of one Dorotheus who had the spiritual charge of a nunnery and used to sit at a window overlooking the convent, 'keeping the peace among the nuns;' also of an old nun, Mother Talis, superioress of a convent at Antioch, so beloved by her nuns, that there was no need of a key in the convent, as in others, to keep the nuns from wandering, as 'they were fast tied by love of her'.¹⁸

St. Basil, St. Augustine, and St. Benedict, all provided for women in their Rule. Mabillon refers to the English nuns as "the peculiar glory of the Benedictine order."

¹⁸ *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. I.

CHAPTER IV

PROMINENT ANGLO-SAXON WOMEN

France was the cradle of the Anglo-Saxon religious communities. It was to the monasteries on the banks of the Marne and the Seine, at Jouarre, Faremoutier, les Andelys, and at Chelles, near Paris, that English women went, in the beginning of the seventh century, to follow the religious life. According to tradition, St. Bathildis was a native of England, and in some unknown way, was carried off, and sold as a slave in France. She was espoused to Clovis II, king of the Franks. By him she had three sons, all of whom finally came to the throne. On the death of her husband, she became regent for her oldest son, and ruled with prudence, to the benefit of both Church and State. She founded several religious houses for both men and women. The famous monastery of Chelles, near Paris, owes its origin to her. The community settled there she placed under the direction and government of St. Bertila. As soon as possible, she gave up the world, and devoted herself to the service of God in this house, where she edified all by her holy life. She died about 680. Here her relics still rest. The devotion of the people saved them from destruction during the Revolution.

St. Caesarius of Arles (501-573) planned for his sister Caesaria and her companions a Rule of life marked by good sense, high spirituality and broad intellectual ideas. These women learned reading and writing—“*omnes litteras discant*”—the arts, domestic science, weaving and spinning. They were obliged to spend at least two hours daily in reading and study.

It was to Chelles that the Anglo-Saxon St. Hereswith went when she wished to become a nun and consecrate her widowhood to God. She was the widow of St. Ethelhere, whose reign of one year in East Anglia was cut short by the cruel war of Oswy. To Chelles also her illustrious sister Hilda wished to go. But St. Aidan, with keen foresight, would not permit it. Thus was saved for the Anglo-Saxon Church St. Hilda and her enduring work. At his bidding, she returned to her own country, where for a year she led a monastic life on the north bank of the river Wear. At the age of thirteen she had been baptized

by St. Paulinus. Venerable Bede asserts that in the sixty-six years of her eventful life, she never lost her baptismal innocence.

We find at least thirty years of her life had passed before she formally entered upon her monastic career. Although she seemed always to lean toward the Celtic monks and their system of government, in this her long delay, she followed not Scottish customs. In Ireland maidens were allowed to take the veil at the age of twelve, while their Saxon sisters waited until ripe maturity. It was St. Aidan who finally consecrated St. Hilda to God. The first monastery she governed was at Hartlepool. Here she achieved great success. Like most religious houses in Ireland, it was a haven for both men and women. Bede says that "Hilda, the servant of Christ, being set over that monastery, began immediately to set all things to a religious system, according as she had been instructed by learned men; for Bishop Aidan and other religious men that knew her and loved her, frequently visited and diligently instructed her, because of her innate wisdom and inclination to the service of God."

Not until 657 did St. Hilda go to Streanshealch, "the Isle of the Beacon". She became the first abbess of the double monastery founded there by Oswy, King of Northumbria. "In Saxon strength that abbey frowned" until the end of the ninth century, when it was destroyed by the Danes. It was they who called the place Whitby because of the white cliffs on which the monastery was built.

Ross in his *Ruined Abbeys of England* states that St. Hilda established some cells or minor convents subordinate to Streanshealch, one of which was at Hackness, in a lovely valley enclosed by foliaged hills, to which she frequently, in old age, retreated for meditation and prayer, and to escape from the constant demands on her time from visitors, who resorted to her counsel, sometimes on trivial matters.

"Of all the sites chosen by monastic architects, after that of Monte Cassino," says Montalembert, "I know none grander and more picturesque than that of Whitby. It is even in certain respects more imposing than the Benedictine capital, as being near the sea. The Esk, which flows through a hilly country,

unlike the ordinary levels of England, forms at its mouth a circular bay, commanded on every side by lofty cliffs. On the summit of one of these rocks, three hundred feet above the sea, Hilda placed her monastery, on a platform of green and short seaside turf, the sides of which slope abruptly towards the northern ocean."

St. Hilda's community reached vast proportions. Her spiritual sway extended over hundreds of souls in both the nunnery and the monastery. The extent of the establishment at Whitby may be gauged when it is recalled that within its walls in 664 was convened the important Synod that determined the exact date for the observance of Easter in England.

The building was begun in 656. Bede says the church was square, so we may conclude it was not unlike the Roman basilicas. It was built of stone, with a wooden roof and unglazed windows. Glass was introduced into England by St. Wilfrid, when he repaired York cathedral.

St. Hilda herself personally supervised the erection of both church and monastery. "Great was her pleasure to see a fabric rising and advancing regularly, in which she was to spend the remainder of her days, where she could enjoy her native soil, live retired from the world, and be instrumental toward the salvation of her ignorant neighbors."

Double monasteries such as St. Basil and his saintly sister, Macrina, presided over were known in the East during the early centuries of Christianity. The custom was probably introduced into Gaul by Cassian. From Gaul it entered Germany, Belgium and Spain. In Spain alone, according to Yepes, there were over two hundred such monasteries. Ireland gives us an instance in that of Kildare. In England most of the early monasteries were double. St. Hilda enjoys the distinction of being the first abbess to preside over such an institution in that country. St. Gregory says that in Italy they were not numerous, but some were found in Sardinia. Bede mentions one in Rome. In the eleventh century double monasteries were prohibited by the Holy See. None now exist in the Roman Catholic Church.

"By their fruits you shall know them." With this standard in mind, we must believe the work done in Whitby under St.

Hilda's guidance was of a high spiritual and intellectual character, for it yielded no fewer than five bishops to the Saxon Church. It was the cradle of the episcopacy in the seventh century. Bishops Bosa, Hedda, Oftfor, John and Wilfrid were men of singular merit and sanctity, Bede asserts. All were products of Whitby training.

"I behold her," says Fuller, "as the most learned female before the Conquest, and may call her the She-Gamaliel, at whose feet many learned men had their education."

The monastery of Whitby, with Caedmon, became the cradle of English poetry. St. Hilda's maternal care of our first poet reveals a woman of large heart and broad mind. Here penetrating gaze and far-seeing intellect have placed our language under heavy obligations.

"It would be singular," says the mortified but affectionate Lacordaire, "if Christianity, founded on the love of God and men, should end in withering up the soul in respect to everything which was not God. Self-denial, far from diminishing love, nourishes and increases it. The ruin of love is self-love, not the love of God; and none ever met with love on earth, with affections stronger and purer, more ardent, more tender, and more lasting, than those to whom the saints gave up their hearts, at once emptied of themselves and filled with God."

One of the strongest proofs we have of the mental and spiritual ascendancy of St. Hilda is the intense affection felt for her by members of her own community. Bede, usually so reserved in his expression, is extravagant when speaking of Hilda. He tells of one of the holy virgins in the same monastery where the servant of God died, who loved her "most passionately". We get what we give in life. No character unloving or unlovable could arouse such affection in her subjects, as did the first abbess of Whitby. Her contemporaries dwell long on her amiable traits. We have drawn largely for our data from Bede and the menology of Anglo-Saxon saints. But Leland speaks of a "*Life of St. Hilda*", by an unknown pen, which he said he saw in the library of Whitby Abbey when he visited it during the reign of Henry VIII. This volume is now unfortunately lost. St. Hilda had under her jurisdiction hundreds of men and women of various talent and disposition. Her keen sense

of justice was probably the characteristic which caused her to give such perfect satisfaction as an executive.

Special stress should be laid on her prudence, since this virtue drew crowds to Whitby to consult her. It reveals the virility of her mind. Prudence is an intellectual virtue, concerned principally with the reason. It is a concomitant of every virtue. Indeed, no virtue is a virtue without prudence. As the Schoolmen say: *Recta ratio agibilium est*. It guides every strong character that is lead to do great things for God. It explains the marvelous success which attended all St. Hilda's undertakings, even the difficult task of governing women. Hence she was mistress in what Gregory the Great calls *the art of arts*—the government of souls. St. Hilda belonged to the sturdy Anglo-Saxon race. They were vigorous in every phase of activity, not less so in their spiritual life than in their civil life. "The work of atonement and salvation, which is the only true emancipation of woman, and, by her, of virtue and the soul, has been the work of the Church with the aid of the Teutonic race. And the Church has done this work only by elevating above and beyond the level of virtue which women in general can reach, that ideal of moral virtue and beauty which can be realized only by virginity consecrated to God."¹⁹ With subjection of the body, St. Hilda joined cultivation of mind and soul. Hers was a complete triumph of spirit over matter. During the six years of acute pain which preceded her death, "she never failed to return thanks to her Maker".

When the end came in 680, "she received Holy Communion to further her on her way, and called together the servants of Christ that were in the same monastery, and admonished them to preserve evangelical peace, among themselves and with others. As she was making her speech, she joyfully saw death approach". Angel-borne, St. Hilda passed from death to life.

With her passing was extinguished the greatest light in all Northumbria. She died, but her work lives on and continues to the present day in the lives of the countless women who devote themselves to the education of the young. Two centuries after her death saw the Danes level her monastery to the ground.

¹⁹ Montalembert: *Monks of the West*.

The legend which says that at certain times of the day her form can be seen flitting over the abbey ruins, is not without meaning. Travelers view with interest those meagre ruins on the northeastern coast of England; historians linger musingly over the few remaining evidences of work achieved under her direction. In her they see the epitome of Anglo-Saxon culture. To the student of character she looms high on the horizon of great personalities. But to the religious teacher the name of Hilda is an inspiration as undying as the Church of which she was so rare an ornament. Her life is one of the brightest pages in all history, and her achievements are among the richest inheritance of modern civilization.

Among the many holy women who dwelt at the Whitby Abbey, St. Elfreda shone with unusual splendor. She was the daughter of Oswy, King of Northumbria. Before the decisive battle of Wenwed, he vowed if his forces were successful, to dedicate his infant child in her virginity to God. When Elfreda was one year old, her father's arch-enemy was defeated and slain. At once with heroic fidelity, he fulfilled his promise. To St. Hilda, then at Hartlepool, he entrusted his beloved child, and with her went a large patrimony. When St. Hilda moved to Whitby, she took her royal charge with her. Faithfully and lovingly did St. Elfreda follow the counsels of her spiritual mother. She soon achieved eminent holiness, and was thought worthy to succeed her saintly mistress as abbess. She had the novel experience of having her own mother, St. Eanfleda, live under her as a simple religious.

St. Elfreda died in the odor of sanctity in 713. She was buried in the abbey church where were laid the remains of her father, mother, and grandfather, St. Edwin, with other saints and noble personages.

It was to the munificence of Oswy, the father of St. Elfreda, that St. Hilda owed her beautiful abbey at Whitby. It is certain that he gave to it not less than twelve manors of land. Malmesbury says it was the largest of the numerous religious establishments founded by St. Oswy's bounty. "Almost faultless in its architectural style, worthy to rank with St. Mary's, York, and Guiseborough, Whitby has been suffered to crumble away in criminal neglect, when its preservation would have

meant incalculable things to the history of English architecture".²⁰

When the historic ruins of Whitby Abbey were shelled by a German cruiser on December 16, 1914, further damage was inflicted on the venerable remains. In March, 1920, the owner of the property, Mrs. Tatten Willoughby ceded it to the Office of Works, as a gift to the English nation. Plans are being made to restore the original church, and use it for parish purposes, since of late years, Whitby has become a fashionable watering place.

We have an historical record of about twenty monasteries established in England before the Danish invasion. The first of these was the famous settlement at Folkstone in Kent. It was founded by the noted St. Eanswida, in 630, and is held to be the first of the many monasteries established in Anglo-Saxon England for women. Numerous legends hover round the name of its saintly foundress. She succeeded in avoiding a matrimonial alliance which her father had planned for her. Instead she took the veil from the hands of Roman missionaries at Canterbury, where she had been educated. Folkstone, on its lofty, white cliffs, surrounded by green pasturage, soon attracted many, and Eanswida set about building a large establishment. Under her prudent government, it became in time not only an ascetic school, but an institution within whose walls literature, the arts, and agriculture were taught. Her miraculous crosier brought to the monastery a much needed stream of pure water, a legend tells us. The wild geese she tamed ate her harvests, and her servants emptied her poultry yard. She died young in 640, little suspecting that the home she loved so well would soon disappear under the ever rising waves of the nearby ocean.

A gentle descendent of Hengist, St. Ethelburga, the first *widow* of the Saxon race to embrace the religious life, established the monastery at Lyminge. She was the daughter of the first Christian king of South Anglia, and married Edwin, the first Christian king of the north. His prosperous reign was crowned

²⁰ Cram: *Ruined Abbeys in Great Britain*.

by a glorious ending. With Bishop Paulinus, she did more than any one else for the propagation of Christianity in the north. On the death of her husband, her brother, the king of Kent, gave her an old Roman villa between Canterbury and the sea. Here she took the veil. Here she passed the last fourteen years of her life. She, the daughter of the founder of Canterbury, and the widow of the founder of York, united the north and the south in her efforts to propagate learning and knowledge.

St. Hieu is said to have been the first woman in the kingdom of Northumbria to consecrate herself to God, in holy virginity. She received the religious habit from St. Aidan, and established the monastery at Hartlepool. Here she did not long remain, but resigned her place to St. Hilda, and retired to Tadcaster, where she made a new foundation. The village now called "Healaugh" which in old English means "Hieu's territory", is thought by some to have been the site of her abode. There near the church some ruins of ancient buildings have been discovered.

The Bollandists and some other writers suppose Hieu, Begu, Bugga, and St. Bega or Bee, to be one and the same person. She ardently desired to go to Rome on a pilgrimage. While writing her desires to St. Boniface, she says: "And besides the care of our own souls, we must bear what is harder still, that of all the souls of every age and of both sexes which have been confided to us, and of which we must render an account before the judgment seat of Christ, not only of their actions, but also of their thoughts, which are known to God alone." It is a satisfaction to know that she finally did get to Rome and died there.

The abbess Bugga wrote the following to Winefrid, after his first success in his missionary labors in Germany:

"I do not cease to thank God for all that I have learned by your blessed letter; that He has led you mercifully through so many unknown countries; that He had favorably inclined toward you the heart of the Pontiff of glorious Rome; that He has cast down before you the enemy of the Catholic Church, Radbod the Trisian. But I declare to you that no revolution of time, no human vicissitude, can change the state of my mind toward you, nor turn it from loving you as I am resolved. The

fervor of love so inspires me, that I am profoundly convinced of arriving at certain repose by your prayers. I renew, then, my entreaties to you to intercede in favor of my lowliness with the Lord. I have not yet been able to obtain the *Passions of the Martyrs*, which you ask me for. I will get them as soon as I can. But you, dearest, send me for my consolation, that collection of *Extracts* from the Holy Scripture which you have promised me in your sweet letter. I beseech you to offer the oblation of the Holy Mass for one of my relatives called N—, whom I loved above all. I send you by the bearer of these lines, fifty sols and an altar cloth. I have not been able to procure anything better. It is a little gift, but is offered you with great love." The letters of the Anglo-Saxon women are touching in their tenderness.

St. Ebba the Elder, so called to distinguish her from St. Ebba the Younger of a later date, was the sister of St. Oswald and Oswy, kings of Northumbria. With the help of Oswy she established a monastery at Ebbesburgh, on the Derwent. Shortly afterward, about 673, she founded the important settlement at Coldingham, on the Northumbrian coast. St. Cuthbert was her devoted and valued friend. He frequently visited her abbey, and instructed the community in the ways of the spiritual life. This community under the inspiration of St. Ebba corrected some grave faults of which they were warned by a dream of St. Adamnan. But after the death of their holy foundress they relapsed, and the dreaded punishment fell upon them.

At the Danish invasion they made ample reparation, however, by so mutilating their faces that the terrified enemy made a hasty retreat. It was to Coldingham St. Ethelreda went to learn monastic discipline from St. Ebba.

What student of higher education does not know of Frideswyda? Her name is indissolubly connected with Oxford, the chief intellectual center of England, that Oxford, which Denifle says belongs to "the primaeval universities which were not founded, but grew". She was the daughter of Didanus, a West-Saxon *sub-regulus*, and his wife Safrida. Her father seems to have had the government of Oxford, and often resided there. He confided the education of his young daughter to Agiva, who was probably an abbess in Winchester, and by her the child was

piously educated. Her hand was sought in marriage by Algar, a chief more powerful than Didanus. He resolved to gain the object of his affections by force. But Frideswyda, with characteristic strength of character, eluded him, sprang into a boat, and sought refuge on the banks of the Isis at a place which some take to be Benson, while others say it was Abington. In his pursuit Algar became blind. This incident struck terror into the hearts of all. It was an answer from heaven to the prayers which Frideswyda addressed to St. Catherine and St. Cecilia to be delivered from her pursuer. So firmly did this story take root in the minds of the English that for several centuries no English king would even approach Oxford for fear of losing his eyesight.

Didanus, the Mercian king, then built a monastery for his daughter, in the vicinity of St. Mary's church. Here she congregated a number of virgins who formed a community which flourished for several ages. Frideswyda died in 735. In the eleventh century her convent was burned down. Upon its restoration in 1049, it passed into the hands of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, when Harold, Earl of Oxford, took an active interest in its re-establishment. Then followed the Norman conquest. Henry the Scholar put the monastery under the control of Norman Canons, with his favorite chaplain Guimond in authority. The relics of the saint were solemnly translated on February 11, 1180, to the elegant structure erected by the Normans. Henry II himself was present on the occasion, and the ceremonies were presided over by Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, the immediate successor of St. Thomas à Becket. The relics were preserved in an exquisite shrine erected in the chapel dedicated to St. Frideswyda. During the middle ages, this chapel drew throngs of fervent worshippers. It was enriched by the gifts of many kings.

The priory of St. Frideswyda was, with the permission of Pope Clement VII, transformed into a college. "Under the name of Christ Church," says Montalembert, "it is still the most considerable college in the University of Oxford. Her church, built in the twelfth century, is the cathedral of that city." Under Elizabeth, the relics of St. Frideswyda were horribly profaned. They were mingled with other bones and dis-

persed, so that it would be impossible for them to receive due honor.

"The story of St. Frideswyda supplies the earliest evidence which can even pretend to be historical, of the existence of Oxford. That story is subjected by Mr. Parker to a no less exhaustive examination than the Alfredian cycle. Its details—King Didanus and his consecrated daughter, her persecution by a wicked king of Leicester, the miraculous blinding of the king or his messengers, the spring that burst forth at Binsey in answer to her prayers—must of course be treated as legendary embellishments, but we may probably recognize in the legend a germ of historical fact, and accept it as pointing to the establishment of a community of nuns ascribing their origin to St. Frideswyda, somewhere about the traditional date 721 A. D. The foundation of this house,—whether or not on the exact site of the modern Christ Church—is the earliest presumptive evidence for the existence of even the nucleus of the later town."²¹

Barking monastery owes its origin to St. Erkonwald, bishop of London. In his youth, he went to the Isle of Chertsey in the Thames where he established a monastery for himself. Seeing that his sister, St. Ethelburga, desired the same life, he founded there about 675, a convent for her and her companions. This became one of those double monasteries, so common in those days, where both men and women were under the rule of the same abbess. Here St. Ethelburga was the spiritual mother of many great servants of God, her chief assistant being St. Hildelitha, who is said to have been recalled from France for that purpose. She is considered the first English woman to consecrate herself to God.

St. Hildelitha was held in veneration by St. Aldhelm, who dedicated to her his book on *Virginity*. St. Boniface mentions her with great respect in his letters. It was in this monastery that St. Cuthburga first took the veil. She later founded Winbourne.

The famous monastery of Croyland was founded by St. Guthlac, where the river Welland flowed into the sea. He had first

²¹ Rashdall: *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*.

been a monk at the double monastery of Repton then governed by the celebrated abbess Elfrida. To live in greater solitude, he retired to the Isle of Croyland, and his sister Pega took up her abode on the opposite bank. For fifteen years she never saw her brother, until he was dying. Shortly after King Ethelbald founded a monastery on the site. In 870, toward the end of August, the Danes reached Croyland, and completely destroyed the famous monastery. Their coming gave to the Church many martyrs. Even the young children studying in the monastery were massacred with the monks. Only one little boy, named Turgar was able to escape. Seventy years after, he witnessed the restoration of the monastery by Turketul, the chancellor of the realm and a grandson of Alfred the Great. At this monastery a library of several hundred volumes was accumulated. But in a great fire all was destroyed. Ingulph, who tells the sad story, says even the beautiful Nadir, or astronomical table, was lost. On it in precious metals, were depicted the stars and the signs of the zodiac. It had been presented to Turketul by a king of France, and was kept in the library for the education of the younger monks. The statement that three hundred of the larger books were not allowed to be taken from the library for the use of the remote schools without the leave of the abbot, shows us that other schools in the villages and townships were conducted by the monks and nuns. The vastness of their educational influence is hard to over estimate. This monastery seems to have been a famous school for Danish-Anglo children of the nobility. In the tenth century the library of Croyland could boast of nine hundred volumes of books, besides a valuable collection of astronomical instruments.

The life of St. Mildred shows us how frequently in these days noble women went to France for their education. The story of her life is shrouded in legend. We have but few historical facts concerning the woman whose influence seems to be more widespread among the devout laity in England than that of any other female saint on the calendar. As late as 1880, we find Pope Leo XIII granting a plenary indulgence on the day her relics were transposed from Deventer in Holland to Thanet.

The ten thousand acres she received on the island of Thanet

from King Egbert were the blood-fine of the ruler for the death of her mother's two brothers. The ground was used in 670 for the establishment which soon raised its second abbess St. Mildred to greater fame among her contemporaries than was enjoyed by St. Augustine himself, and this in the very land he evangelized. Her enterprising spirit was manifested by the large London wheat trade she carried on by means of her own vessels. For this reason a church was dedicated to her in Breadstreet, which still bears her name.

Winbourne, the most famous of all Saxon monasteries, was founded in 713, by St. Cuthburga, sister of King Ina. She was assisted and joined by St. Quenburga. The foundation was a double one, but the strictest rules of separation were enforced. So rigorous was she in this rule, that no men, secular or religious, not even bishops, were allowed to enter the enclosure of the nuns. It was from this monastery that St. Boniface drew his Lioba, Thecla, Walburga, and the other holy women who aided him in his apostolic work in Germany.

Eadburga, abbess in Thanet, was one of the early friends and correspondents of St. Boniface. She was a woman of extraordinary ability, great love of learning, and such influence as to win several royal charters for her monastery. In his letters to her St. Boniface gives us an interesting phase not only of his own generous nature, but also of the noble character of the illustrious Eadburga.

While laboring among the Hessians and Thuringians, he asks her to send him through the priest Eoban the letters of the apostle Peter, which she was to write for him in gold characters. "Often," he says, "gifts of books and vestments, the proofs of your affection, have been to me a consolation in misfortune. So I pray that you will continue as you have begun, and write for me in gold characters the epistles of my master, the holy apostle Peter, to the honor and reverence of Holy Writ before mortal eyes while I am preaching, and because I desire to have before me always the words of him who led me on my mission." A few of the purple Gospels in gold lettering of this period have been preserved. Bishop Wilfrid had the four Gospels "in purest gold on purple colored parchment." The art of writing in gold on parchment was unknown to Scottish artists. It was in-

troduced into England from Italy, and soon became an important occupation among educated men and women.

Eadburga's liberal response to his request, caused Boniface to write to her: "Beloved Sister, with gifts of holy books you have comforted the exile in Germany with spiritual light. For in this dark remoteness among German peoples man must come to the distress of death had he not the word of God as a lamp unto his feet and as a light unto his paths. Fully trusting in your love, I beseech that you pray for me, for I am shaken by my shortcomings, that take hold of me as though I were tossed by a tempest on a dangerous sea."

Again he writes to Bugga: "We thank you for the gifts and vestments you sent and pray to God Almighty to put aside a gift for you in return with the angels and archangels in the heights of heaven." Books were frequently exchanged between Boniface and his friends in English monasteries. And more than once he rewarded their generosity by sending them a silver style.

We are indebted to the monk Rudolf of Fulda for an account of St. Lioba's life. He tells us that at an early age she was sent to the monastery of Winbourne, where she was under the care of the learned abbess Tetta. "She grew up so carefully tended by the abbess and the sisters," he says, "that she cared for naught but the monastery and the study of Holy Writ. She was never pleased by irreverent jokes, nor did she care for the elder maidens' senseless amusements. Her mind was fixed on the love of Christ, and she was ever ready to listen to the word of God, or to read it, and to commit to memory what she heard and read to her own practical advantage. In eating and drinking she was so moderate that she despised the allurements of a great entertainment and felt content with what was put before her, never asking for more. When she was not reading, she was working with her hands, for she had learned that those who do not work have no right to eat."

When Boniface was settled but a short time in Germany, he sent an envoy with letters into England to the abbess Tetta, "begging her as a comfort to his labor and as a help in his mission, to send over the virgin Lioba, whose reputation for holiness and virtuous teaching had penetrated across wide lands

and filled the hearts of many with praise for her." He had kept up an intimate correspondence with his friends and relatives in Winbourne, in spite of his labors in far-off Friesland, as the following letter of one of his fair correspondents testifies:

"This too, I ask for," writes Lioba, "correct the rusticity of my style, and do not neglect to send me a few words in proof of your good will. I have composed the few verses which I enclose according to the rules of poetic versification, not from pride, but from a desire to cultivate the beginnings of learning, and now I am longing for your help. I was taught by Ead-burga who unceasingly devotes herself to this divine art."

Here follow four lines of verse addressed to Almighty God, to show Boniface what she can do. They run:—

Arbiter omnipotens, solus qui cuncta creavit,
In regno Patris semper qui lumine fulget,
Qua jugiter flograns sic regnat gloria Christi,
Inlaesum servet semper te jure perenni."

The abbess Tetta readily granted the request of St. Boniface. Soon many of her daughters were on German soil, helping the Apostle of Freisland to establish Christianity among the natives and to educate the people along the lines of Anglo-Saxon culture.

"In pursuance of this plan, Boniface now arranged monastic routine and occupation, according to accepted rule, and set Sturmi as abbot over the monks, and Lioba as spiritual mother over the nuns, and gave into her care a monastery at a place called Bischofsheim, where a considerable number of servants of God were collected together, who now followed the example of their blessed teacher, were instructed to divine knowledge, and so profited by her teaching, that several of them in their turn became teachers elsewhere; for few monasteries of women existed in those districts where Lioba's pupils were not sought as teachers. She was a woman of great power, and of such strength of purpose that she thought no more of her fatherland and of her relatives, but devoted all her energies to what she had undertaken, that she might be blameless before God, and a model in behavior and in discipline to all those who were under her. She never taught what she did not practise. And there was neither conceit nor domineering in her attitude.

She was affable and kindly without exception to everyone. She was as beautiful as an angel. Her talk was agreeable, her intellect was clear, her abilities were great. She was a Catholic in faith; she was moderate in her expectations; wide in her affections. She always showed a cheerful face, but she was never drawn into hilarity. No one ever heard a word of abuse pass her lips, and the sun never went down on her anger. In eating and drinking, she was liberal to others, but moderate to herself, and the cup out of which she usually drank was called by the Sisters 'the little one of our beloved', on account of its smallness. She was so bent on reading that she never laid aside her book except to pray or to strengthen her slight frame with food and sleep. From childhood upwards she had studied grammar and the other liberal arts, and hoped by perseverance to attain a perfect knowledge of religion, for she was well aware that the gifts of nature are doubled by study. She zealously read the books of the Old and New Testaments, and committed their divine precepts to memory; but she further added to the rich store of her knowledge by reading the writings of the Holy Fathers, the canonical decrees, and the laws of the Church. In all her actions she showed great discretion, and thought over the outcome of an undertaking beforehand so that she might not afterwards repent of it. She was aware that inclination is necessary for prayer and for study, and she was therefore moderate in holding vigils. She always took a rest after dinner, and so did the Sisters under her, especially in summer time, and she would not suffer others to stay up too long, for she maintained that the mind is keener for study after sleep."

St. Lioba was in constant contact with temporal rulers. Well did she deserve her name—*Die Liebe*—the beloved. Pepin visited her often. She was the friend and counselor of Charles the Great, and received presents from him. His wife and queen Hildegard was so charmed with her that she tried to persuade Lioba to come and live with her. Lioba died in 780, and according to the wish of St. Boniface, she was buried at Fulda. But the monks gave her a resting place, in their cathedral, separate from that of Germany's great apostle.

Another Kentish monastery was founded at Sheppey by Earconbert's wife, St. Sexburga. Little is known of the cir-

cumstances of its origin. St. Sexburga was a princess of East Anglia, which owed its Christianity to King Edwin of Northumbria. After twenty-four years of conjugal life with one of the kings of Kent, "she became a widow, and became regent for four years of the kingdom of her son. As soon as he was old enough to reign, she abdicated, not only the crown, but secular life, took the veil from the hands of Archbishop Theodore, and founded the monastery in the Isle of Sheppey, situated at the mouth of the Thames, and separated from the mainland by that arm of the sea in which Augustine, on Christmas day, 597, baptized at once ten thousand Saxons. This monastery took and kept the name of *Minster*, like that which was founded at the same time by St. Sexburga's niece, Demneva, in the neighboring isle of Thanet. Here she ruled a community of seventy-seven nuns, until she learned that her sister Etheldreda intended to institute a religious house at Ely. She returned to her own country and became a simple nun under the crosier of her illustrious sister, 'in order to have my glorious sister Etheldreda for my misterss,' said she, 'and to take part immediately in her labors here below, that I may share her recompense'."

Bede tells us that Etheldreda renounced the splendors of royalty to devote herself to humility and self-denial in the monastery which she founded at Ely in 673, in the district of Northumbria. She and her nuns received her sister Sexburga with a warm welcome. But their joy was of short duration, for Etheldreda died after only seven years of religious life. In his supplement to *The History of Ely* by Bentham, Essex describes the ruins of the conventual church which was begun by Etheldreda. He says the church probably consisted of two parts, the nave and the choir, the windows of the nave outside being ornamented with pillars and arches, and the choir being arched with stone. Traces were still left of the apartments of the abbess from which she could enter the church in a private way, and of an opposite building of equal dimensions, which served as a dormitory for the nuns. At a short distance from these, the remains of another building were discovered, one room of which, near the entrance of the settlement was a parlor for the reception of strangers, and over it a dormitory for the men.

"Ely is in the province of the East Angles," writes Bede, "a country of about six hundred families, in the nature of an island, enclosed either with marshes or water, and therefore it has its name from the abundance of eels which are taken in those marshes." When the monastery was destroyed by the Danes in 870, it had already given to the Church four saintly abbesses, SS. Etheldreda, Sexburga, Ermenilda and Wexburga. The last named was entrusted by her uncle Ethelred with the general inspection of all the nunneries in his kingdom. Before entering on the government of Ely, she was head of Weedon, Trentham, and Hanbury.

Wilton Abbey was at first a foundation for secular priests, made by Earl Wulstan, of Wiltshire, about 773. After his death, his widow changed it into a convent for twelve nuns. She was St. Alburga, sister of King Egbert. Because he gave his consent to the change, this king is often spoken of as the founder of this monastery. St. Alburga herself joined the community and died there. But it is best known as the home of St. Edith, the "handfast" child of Edgar, king of the English, and Wulfrid, a woman wearing the veil, though not a nun. Wulfrid refused to enter into a permanent marriage with Edgar, and retired with her favored child to Wilton. Edith seems to have been a learned person. While yet a child she received the veil from the hands of Bishop Ethelwold of Winchester, and at the age of fifteen she refused three abbeyes offered by her father. She built the church of St. Denis at Wilton, and had it consecrated by the great St. Dunstan. She died shortly afterward at the age of twenty-three.

St. Elffeda, the daughter of Earl Ethelwold, founded the monastery of Ramsey, in Hampshire, during the reign of Edward the elder. In 967 Edgar remodelled the monastery by introducing the Benedictine Rule. St. Merwenna was its first abbess. Under her government it became prominent as a center of learning and holiness of life. It was renowned as a retreat for royal women.

The same may be said of the monastery at Amesbury, where Matilda, daughter of Edward I, retired in the thirteenth century. Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry III, had previously taken the veil in the same convent.

Most of these monasteries were destroyed by the Danes; some were restored during the Norman period, and new ones were established. It was principally in Wessex, in the narrow area of Dorset, Wilts, and Hampshire, where monasteries were controlled by women of the house of Cerdic, that any religious establishments escaped Danish destruction. Barking in Essex and the Wessex nunneries also had an unbroken tradition from the time of their foundation until the Protestant revolt.

Between 696 and 716, King Wihtred and Queen Werburga granted a charter to the churches and monasteries of Kent, assuring them security against interference. Five lady abbesses placed their signatures to this document, which shows that at the close of the seventh century there existed in Kent alone no fewer than five religious settlements governed by abbesses. They were situated at Upminster (in Thanet), known as St. Mildred's, Southminster, Folkstone, Lyminge, and Sheppey. This charter is of great historical value, showing as it does the connection existing among the Kentish houses at a time of which we know but little. It proves that men who had the tonsure, and women who had the veil were classed together. It stipulated that no abbot or abbess should be appointed without the consent of a prelate.

"In 694, abbesses were in so great esteem for their sanctity and prudence that they were summoned to the Council at Becanceld (in Kent) and the names of five (not one abbot) subscribed to the constitutions there made." Abbesses had to furnish military service by proxy.

Religious are prominent in our list of educated Anglo-Saxon women, because it is principally of them that we have any historical record. This does not lead us to infer that secular women were deprived of educational advantages. We know the convents educated many young girls who never emitted the religious vows. In fact most of the children educated in convents were returned to their parents and entered upon worldly pursuits.

But the religious life at this period offered peculiar advantages to women. It gave them a social standing much above the ordinary. It opened for them a career which, in many cases, was unattainable under other environment. The con-

secrated life was held in reverence, while the vows were a protection. The abbess of Anglo-Saxon days received the homage and fealty of her subjects, both men and women. She aimed at making her monastery self-sufficing. Its economic value in the neighborhood was so great that frequently it became the nucleus of the future town and city. Double monasteries were an economic convenience, the efficiency of which was often due to the supervision of a woman.

CHAPTER V

ANGLO-SAXON EDUCATION

Of the educational work in England between 597 and 669, we have but scant record. And were it not for Bede, we should know absolutely nothing of the beginnings of English schools. When St. Augustine returned from his consecration at Arles, in the spring of 598, Bede says, "Ethelbert did not delay in giving his teachers a place befitting the dignity of their seat in Canterbury, his metropolis, and at the same time conferring on them necessary possessions of various kinds." Again he tells us, "Augustine, as soon as he had obtained his episcopal see in the royal city, with the king's assistance, recovered possession of a Church which had been formerly built by the work of the Roman Christians, and dedicated in the name of Jesus Christ." This historic structure has been known as Christ Church ever since.

In the suite of St. Augustine there were about forty monks. With them he established at Canterbury the grammar school which still flourishes under the name of the King's School. It is so called, not from its original founder, Ethelbert, but from its re-founder, Henry VIII. That England's oldest grammar school was really so founded at Canterbury can be proved from a subsequent passage of Bede in which he says that in 631 Sigbert, with the assistance of Bishop Felix, founded for the East English a grammar school for boys "after the custom of the Canterbury folk."

Two years after this, a song school was established at York, with Canterbury again for its model. "James the Deacon who, though an ecclesiastic, was also a saint, acted as master to many in church chanting after the Roman or Canterbury fashion." The song and grammar schools were distinct institutions, but existed side by side, except in small places, where they were under one master. The song schools gave an elementary education, while at the grammar schools a secondary education could be obtained. Before the days of the universities, it was only at the grammar schools that those subjects could be learned

which were useful to priest, lawyer, statesman, and government employee.

About seventy years after the landing of St. Augustine in England, Canterbury received its seventh archbishop in the person of Theodore. He was an Asiatic, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, about 602, and died at Canterbury, September 19, 690. He was a monk too, probably of the Basilian Order, but not yet a priest, when Pope Vitalian chose him for the see of Canterbury. He was consecrated by the Pope himself in March, 668, but did not reach England until May of the next year. Much disorder then existed in the English Church from jealousy and bitterness engendered by the lately settled controversy of the paschal question. Disorganization reigned in the various dioceses, many of which were large, unwieldy, and without a bishop. Bede says, "Theodore at once visited all the islands where the tribes of the Angles inhabited." The force of his personality was so great that he is "the first archbishop whom all the English Church obeyed." At Hertford, in 673, he convoked the first synod of English bishops, which became a prototype of the future parliament. He reorganized the diocesan system in England, at the expense of much misunderstanding with Wilfrid, the intrepid archbishop of York. The historian Stubbs draws our attention to the fact that Theodore did important work not only in developing a single united ecclesiastical body out of the heterogeneous churches of the several British kingdoms, but in realizing a national unity which was not to be attained in secular matters for nigh three centuries.

Speaking of the educational work accomplished by Theodore, Montalembert says, "The monasteries having been thus placed under the most imposing safeguard by the Greek metropolitan of England, there yet remained for him, as well as for his African assistant Adrian, an intellectual and literary development as worthy of the admiration as of the gratitude of posterity. Both were profoundly attached to and imbued with not only ecclesiastical knowledge, but secular learning, that double intellectual current of which the middle ages never ceased to give examples. Theodore had brought with him a copy of Homer, which he read perpetually, and which was long preserved and admired by his ecclesiastical descendants. There

gathered round them in the monasteries in which they lived, or which they visited, a crowd of young and ardent disciples, whom they led daily to the fountain of knowledge. While explaining Holy Scripture to them with particular care, they taught their scholars also ecclesiastical astronomy and arithmetic, which served to establish the paschal computation, and afterwards the art of composing Latin verses. But it was chiefly the study of the two classic tongues which flourished under their care. These became so general that sixty years after, there were still monks trained in the school of Adrian and Theodore who spoke Greek and Latin as readily as Anglo-Saxon. At the same time, music and chanting, hitherto cultivated only in the monasteries of Canterbury and by the deacon James of York, spread all over England. Monasteries thus transformed into homes of scientific study, could not but spread a taste and respect for intellectual life, not only among the clergy, but also among their lay-protectors, the friends and neighbors of each community. Under the powerful impulse given to it by the two Roman monks, England became almost as important a literary center as Ireland or Italy."

"Nor is it without significance," remarks Cardinal Newman, "that the Anglo-Saxon Church, itself the creation of the Benedictines, and the seat from which their influence went out for the education or conversion of Europe, from the Baltic to the Bay of Biscay, should have its share in this honor; and that as Theodore was brought all the way from Tarsus to Canterbury, so Lanfranc from Lombardy and Anselm from Piedmont, should successively fill the archiepiscopal throne of Theodore."

The culture developed in England by Theodore and Adrian was purely Benedictine. From the beginning the Benedictines applied themselves to literature. They had greater or less schools according to the size of the house. The greater they wished to throw open to all, so that seculars as well as clerics might have access. Although the pupils were free to leave at any time, many entered the community and were thus lost to the state. This frequently led kings to choose monks for civil government, because none capable of it were to be found in the secular state.

The same may be said of the women. Many of the girls

confided to the nuns for their education, became members of the community. In the conventual system, the female religious was teacher, philanthropist, doctor, and nurse. Nuns carried on all kinds of secular work. Indeed we know that throughout the middle ages, convent schools for rich and poor alike were the only schools in existence. The nuns were the only women able to qualify themselves to become instructors.

Schools for young boys and girls were conducted by the nuns in the villages and cities where they were located. In 889 the Bishop of Soissons ordered the boys and girls to be kept apart. The Council of Cloveshoe held by Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury in 749, insists that abbesses as well as abbots provide for the education of their households. It should be borne in mind that instruction was imparted gratis by both men and women, even to the end of the twelfth century. Pope Alexander III., who died in 1181, was truly the minister of education for all Europe. When he convened the Third Lateran Council, he formally decreed that all education should be free. No people were more generous in this respect than the Irish, and no schools gave so liberal an education as those conducted under Celtic auspices.

"In the convents the female portion of the population found their only teachers, the rich as well as the poor, and the destruction of the religious houses by Henry was the absolute extinction of any systematic education for women during a long period. Thus at Winchester Convent the list of the ladies being educated within the walls at the time of the suppression shows that these Benedictine nuns were training the children of the first families in the country. Carrow in Norfolk for centuries gave instruction to the daughters of the neighboring gentry, and as early as A. D. 1273, a papal prohibition was obtained from Pope Gregory X., restraining the nobility from crowding this monastery with more sisters than its income would support."²²

Naturally we ask what was the nature of the education given in the monasteries. Its tone reflected the mind of the people

²² Gasquet: *Suppression of the Monasteries.*

at large. It was essentially ecclesiastical. But that was the only education available at the time. The monks and nuns transmitted to their pupils the intellectual wealth of the pre-Christian era, increased by patristic learning.

Education between 700 and 1200, may be divided into primary, secondary, and higher. Instruction usually began at the age of seven. The first book committed to memory by every pupil was the Latin psalter. It was the *sine quâ non* condition of an elementary education. Even down in the middle of the eleventh century we meet the Lady Helvidia teaching the psalter to her little son, who became later the celebrated Leo IX.

"By preserving the use of the Latin tongue," Dr. Lingard wisely remarks, "the missionaries imposed on the clergy the necessity of study, kept alive the spirit of improvement, and transmitted to future generations the writings of the classics, and the monuments of profane and ecclesiastical history."

The Benedictine monasteries were not universities. They were schools for very young children, grammar schools, and seminaries. After reading, scholars were taught to write. At first they used a style on waxed tablets. Then they were taught to use pen and ink on parchment. Writing was a much coveted accomplishment in those days when the magic of the printing-press was unknown.

We must bear in mind that the mediæval schools were descended from the Greek and Roman schools. At an early stage in the curriculum, the systematic study of Latin was introduced. After the declensions and conjugations were mastered, the classic tongue was used in conversation. But we can readily believe it was not popular among the Anglo-Saxon children for colloquial purposes.

During the period of their secondary education, pupils had to master thoroughly the intricacies of Latin. In the grammar school, the classics were taught. For this, grammar was the basis. Indeed it was regarded as the foundation of the trivium and the quadrivium, which constituted higher education at this time. Charles the Great had in his court a beautiful painting representing the seven liberal arts, in which grammar was queen. She was seated under the tree of knowledge, a crown on her head, a knife in her right hand with which to scratch

out errors, and a thong in her left. The thong symbolized grammar's supremacy. It was also a symbol of that rigid discipline which existed in schools until the time of St. Anselm. To the people of the middle ages, grammar was the art of speaking and writing correctly. But it was more too. It was the art of explaining the poets and historians. On it the greater part of the students' time was expended. Donatus and Priscian were the texts used even down to the thirteenth century. Books were very scarce. Hence much copying had to be done. In this way the pupils gradually wrote their own text books. The more advanced studied prosody.

The trivium and quadrivium were the heritage of heathen philosophy. We know how Pythagoras prescribed the study of arithmetic, music, and geometry. Plato and Aristotle insisted on grammar and music, which, with gymnastics, were the substance of Greek education. Seneca speaks, though not approvingly, of grammar, music, geometry, and astronomy, as the matter of the education of his own day. Philo has added to these logic and rhetoric. St. Augustine, in enumerating the trivium and quadrivium, begins with arithmetic and grammar, including under the latter history. Then he speaks of logic and rhetoric; then of music which includes poetry as equally addressing the ear. And lastly he mentions geometry and astronomy, as appealing to the eye. The Alexandrians whom he followed, arranged them differently: grammar, rhetoric, and logic or philosophy, which branched off into the four mathematical sciences of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. This was the order adopted in Christian education. The first three comprise the trivium, the last four, the quadrivium. Huxley says, "I doubt if the curriculum of any modern university shows so clear and generous a comprehension of what is meant by culture as this old quadrivium and trivium did."

That the pagan poets and philosophers were studied in early English schools, is sufficiently testified by the contents of the numerous libraries. While Virgil and Plato held a conspicuous place, Prudentius and Augustine claimed a critical perusal.

Elementary Greek was mastered in the grammar schools, and attention was paid to rhetoric, through the medium of

Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Much time was spent on the art of letter writing and keeping of public documents, for in after life these accomplishments often proved of practical value. That this course was followed irrespective of sex is shown by the correspondence and literary labors of the Anglo-Saxon women.

We see the education given was solely through the medium of the classics, Greek and Latin, in the early days of Anglo-Saxon learning. It was reserved for the period of the Alfreudian renaissance to rouse in the people a keen appreciation for, and a critical study of, their own vernacular.

H. Rashdall, in his *Universities of the Middle Ages*, writes: "From the beginning of the ninth century, all the more famous monasteries had two distinct schools, one for the *oblats*, the other for outsiders. One of the complex causes for the astonishing new birth of Europe was the conversion of the Scandinavian pirates into Christians and civilized Normans. In Germany under the enlightened rule of the Ottos, the symptoms of a better order of things were already to be traced before the middle of the tenth century. Though in a sense, the authority of Aristotle was supreme throughout this, as well as the latter medieval period in the formation of scholastic philosophy, the influence of Plato upon European thought counted for at least as much as that of the Stagyrte."

"Grammar schools," says Leach, "instead of being comparatively modern, post-Reformation inventions, are among our most ancient institutions, some of them far older than the Lord Mayor of London or the House of Commons."

"There is not the smallest doubt that the provision for secondary schools was far greater in proportion to the population during the middle ages than it has ever been since. Every collegiate church kept a secondary school, and every cathedral church maintained in early days a small university."²³

Arthur Leach elsewhere unhesitatingly asserts: "If the lower classes lost a chance of being levelled up educationally (during the reign of Henry VIII), the middle classes were distinctly

²³ Leach: *School Supply in the Middle Ages*.

levelled down. People have talked and written as if the grammar schools of the middle ages and of the new learning were little better than elementary schools, scattered in small numbers about the land, and attended by a very small number of scholars, who just learned to stumble through *hic, haec, hoc*, like Master Page in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' or to have a dim idea of the meaning of the Mass.

"The proportion of the population which had opportunity of access to grammar schools, and, as we can see, used their opportunities, was very much larger then than now. Certainly it was larger than the proportion at the time of the only authoritative statistics on the subject; viz., in 1865-1866, as given in the Schools Inquiry Commission's Report."

Again he writes: "It was precisely in the cathedral schools and the other great schools, the schools of the quasi-cathedral collegiate churches, where the strongest distinction was drawn between the song school, in which chanting, reading and writing were taught, and the grammar school to which boys were not admitted until they had learned their accidence,—where Latin, dialectic, and rhetoric were taught, which enabled a youth of 16 to 18 to go straight to the university, or to a learned profession. The learned professions required a competent knowledge of Latin far more directly then than now. A need for Latin was not confined to the Church and the priest. The diplomatist, the lawyer, the civil servant, the physician, the naturalist, the philosopher, wrote, read, and to a large extent spoke and perhaps thought in Latin. Nor was Latin only the language of the higher professions. A merchant, or the bailiff of a manor, wanted it for his accounts; every town clerk or guild clerk wanted it for his minute book.

"The poor who are spoken of in these old foundations are not the poor in our sense, the destitute poor, the unsuccessful among the laboring classes, but the relatively poor, the poor relations of the upper classes. That occasionally bright boys were snatched up out of the rank of the real poor, and turned into clerics, or to become lawyers, civil servants, bishops, is not to be doubted. But it was the middle classes, whether country or town, the younger sons of the nobility or farmers, the lesser land-holders, the prosperous tradesmen, who created a demand

for education, and furnished the occupants of grammar schools."²⁴

When we compare the education imparted during the Renaissance with that of Anglo-Saxon times, we are led to believe that during the latter period all available knowledge was more widely diffused than during the humanistic period. At least it was less costly. Learning was imparted *gratis* during the so-called dark ages, while during the Renaissance it was reserved for those who were able and willing to pay for it to exacting instructors. The Renaissance formed an educated class of society. In early medieval days equal advantages were open to rich and poor alike. Neither did the Anglo-Saxons lose by spending some time on the study of Christian authors. According to modern standards, educational value does not depend so much on which author a student studies as on how he studies. And surely a Prudentius and an Augustine were not inferior in style and diction to Latin authors of three hundred years before them.

But in one respect the Anglo-Saxon students had a decided advantage over the pupils of the Renaissance. They paid great attention to logic whose disciplinary value was wholly ignored by the humanists. It is doubtful whether their critical perusal of the classics was a full compensation for that mental virility which comes with a close study of dialectics.

²⁴ Leach: *English Schools at the Reformation*.

CHAPTER VI

ANGLO-SAXON EDUCATORS

Within a hundred years after their conversion to Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons had attained a high degree of culture. This was chiefly brought about by the labors of the learned Theodore and Adrian at Canterbury, and their faithful pupils. Among these, St. Aldhelm occupies a conspicuous place. Bede calls him "a wonder of erudition." He was born in 640 in southern England, and first studied at Malmesbury under the celebrated Irish educator, Maidulf. He then went to Canterbury, where, with Theodore and Adrian, he perfected his Latin and Greek, and further developed his musical talent. From Canterbury he returned to Malmesbury. This monastery was famous up to the time of the middle ages, owing to the influence of St. Aldhelm. In 705 the district of Wessex was divided into two bishoprics, and St. Aldhelm became bishop of the see of Sherbourne.

St. Aldhelm took great interest in the education of women. He delighted in their society, manifested much concern at their spiritual and intellectual development, and to them directed many of his letters. Besides his great prose treatise on virginity, addressed to the nuns of Barking, he also wrote a long poem in heroic hexameters, called *The Praise of Virgins*. Its preface is addressed to the abbess Maxima. It is followed by a poem on the *Eight Chief Sins*, also intended for the instruction of religious women.

In the opening lines of his *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, he has immortalized the names of some of the Barking nuns: Hildelitha, Justina, Cuthburga, Osburga, Ealdegitha, Scholastica, Hildburga, Burngitha, Eulalia, and Thecla. He praises them as gymnosophists, as scholars, and as fighters in the arena of discipline. He tells them that, like bees, they should collect everywhere material for study.

"Sometimes," says he, "you study the Prophets, sometimes the Books of the Law, now skillfully tracing the four-fold wording of the Gospel story, expounded in the mystic commentaries of the Catholic Fathers, and spiritually bared to the ker-

nel and disposed fitly according to the four-square pattern of ecclesiastical usage, namely according to the letter, allegory, tropology, and anagogy; now carefully searching into the writers of history and into the collections of chronographers, who have handed down the changing events of the past in wording that impresses the mind. Sometimes you carefully examine the rules of grammarians, the laws of accentuation measured by tone and time, fixed in poetic feet by marks of punctuation, that is divided into parts of verse consisting of two and a half and three and a half feet, and changed in endless varieties of metre."

St. Aldhelm then portrays in glowing language the beauty of the life of virginity, the temptations of such a vocation, and the subtle snares of pride. The books he recommends to women are a close study of Cassian's *Duties of Monastic Life*, and the *Moralities* of Gregory the Great. The Psalms are to be read frequently to acquire habitual cheerfulness in God's service.

We are particularly struck by his allusion to the personal appearance of the clergy and consecrated women at this time.

"It shames me," he complains, "to speak of the bold impudence, of the conceit, and the fine insolence of stupidity, which are found both among nuns, who abide under the rule of a settlement, and among the men of the Church who live as clergy under the rule of the Pontiff. These act contrary to canonical decrees and to the rules of regular life, for with many-colored vestments and with elegant adornments, the body is set off and the external form decked out limb by limb. The appearance of the other sex agrees with it; a vest of fine linen of a violet color is worn, above it a scarlet tunic with a hood, sleeves striped with silk and trimmed with red fur; the locks on the forehead and the temples are curled with a crisping iron, the dark head veil is given up for white and colored head-dresses which, with bows of ribbon sewn on, reach down to the ground; the nails, like those of a falcon, or sparrow hawk, are pared to resemble talons."

Brilliant, luxurious clothing seems to have been indulged in by both men and women of the Anglo-Saxon Church. Bede and Boniface are vehement in their denunciations of this remnant of barbarian gaudiness. Henry Shaw, in his *Dresses and*

Decoration of the Middle Ages, says: "The art of jewelry appears to have been extensively encouraged among the Anglo-Saxons. People of rank and wealth covered their persons with bracelets, rings, brooches, and other ornaments, in precious metals and stones. Their ornaments were in general richer in the materials than in the design."

At an early period organs were found in the Saxon Churches. Some hold that the Pontiff Vitalian was the first person in the West to possess an organ. If this be true, then we may suppose this instrument to have been introduced by Theodore into England. Organs certainly were familiar to St. Aldhelm, for at the close of the seventh century, he tells the admirer of music who dislikes the harp, to listen "to the thousand voices of the organ."

Elsewhere he enumerates the studies of his age as Latin and Greek grammar, geometry, arithmetic, music, mechanics, astronomy, and astrology. He studied the Holy Scripture in its original Hebrew. But this student who mastered and taught Virgil, Juvenal, Lucan and Persius, judged his labors in these studies as trifling in comparison with "the long and intricate calculations of arithmetic." And this is not surprising when we remember that all mathematical calculation at that time was done by means of the Roman notation.

St. Aldhelm had more than one relative among the nuns of Barking. They propagated his great prose work which had a wide influence on his own and subsequent generations. He occupies a prominent place among Anglo-Saxon educators, because through his exertions was founded the monastery of Winbourne, destined to become a prominent intellectual center for women in England during the Anglo-Saxon period, and from which that intellectual life was propagated in Germany.

Anglo-Saxon England owed to Benedict Biscop "the finest monasteries north of the Alps." He was of noble birth, born about 628, and died on January 12, 690. His early life was spent at the court of the Northumbrian king Oswy. When only twenty-five years old, he journeyed to Rome. On his return, he used all his influence to introduce Roman rites and customs in England. In him the ardent Wilfrid found an enthusiastic ally. During his life he visited Rome five times. Considering

the difficulties of travel in those days, we can not help marveling at his brave spirit. On his way back to England, after his second visit to the Eternal City, he stopped at Lerins in 666, and took the religious habit. Within two years he was again in Rome. It was then Pope Vitalian asked him to accompany the monk Adrian and Archbishop Theodore to England. At once Benedict was appointed abbot of St. Peter's at Canterbury. In 671 he resigned this office and made another pilgrimage to Rome. On this and subsequent journeys he collected numerous relics, books, and paintings, with which he enriched his joint religious foundations at Wearmouth and Jarrow.

His monasteries became abodes of industry and learning. As an educator he deserves mention not only for fostering sacred and profane knowledge, but because the buildings he reared sheltered Venerable Bede, the father of English history. Speaking of the pictures that St. Benedict Biscop hung on the walls of his churches dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, Bede says:

"Those therefore, who knew not how to read, entering these churches, found on all sides, agreeable and instructive objects representing Christ and His saints, and recalling to their memory the grace of His Incarnation and the terrors of the Last Judgment."

St. Benedict Biscop was the first to introduce stone churches into England. So beautiful was the structure he erected at Wearmouth, that Naitan, king of the Picts, asked the French masons employed, to build for him a similar edifice in his kingdom. Bede tells us that the glass windows in St. Peter's church at Wearmouth were the first in England. "It is an art," he adds, "not to be despised, because of its use in furnishing lamps and other kinds of vessels for the cloisters." The monastery at Wearmouth was begun in 674. In 682 Benedict Biscop obtained a second grant of land from king Egfrid, and commenced the famous monastery of Jarrow. It was on the Tyne, only five miles distant from Wearmouth.

When outlining early Christian education, we mentioned the importance attached to the chanting schools. In his continental travels, St. Benedict Biscop had heard and learned to appreciate the Roman chant, known as the Gregorian. Naturally the Anglo-Saxons were passionately fond of music.

The Roman chant had been introduced into Northumbria by James the Deacon, a co-laborer of St. Paulinus, who, says Bede, "was extraordinarily skillful in singing, and taught the same to many, after the customs of the Romans."

Benedict asked Pope Agatho to let him take to England the Venerable John, abbot of St. Martin's, and Arch-cantor of St. Peter's in Rome, to teach in his monastery the method of singing throughout the ecclesiastical year, as practiced in the Eternal City. His request was granted, which shows the importance the Papacy attached to the work of Benedict Biscop. Abbot John taught singing and reading aloud, and committed to writing all that was requisite for the proper celebration of the festivals during the year. "All which rules," adds Bede, "are still observed there, and still have been copied by many other monasteries. And the said John not only taught the brethren of that monastery, but such as had skill in singing resorted from almost all the monasteries of the same province to hear him, and many invited him to teach in other places."

Modern educators will readily grant that the service done by Benedict Biscop for the culture of Anglo-Saxon men and women deserves recognition and praise.

According to Bede, St. Cuthbert was born in Britannia, about 635, of lowly extraction, probably near Melrose. When as a boy, he tended sheep on the mountain-side near Melrose Abbey, no one dreamed of his future educational influence. In 657, while keeping the night-watches with his flock, he saw the soul of St. Aidan carried to heaven by angels. This together with the prophecy of a playfellow in his childhood, made him determine to become a monk. But it was not until after the decisive battle of Winwidfield that he was able to begin his religious life. He entered the monastery at Melrose, and soon distinguished himself for eminent sanctity. When the foundation at Ripon was made, he went as guest-master. But in 661, when this monastery adopted the Roman customs, he returned to Melrose where the Celtic system was still in vigor. In 664, a dreadful pestilence made alarming ravages in this abbey. Cuthbert was attacked with the disease, and recovered. But the prior, St. Boisil, was a victim. At his death he was succeeded by St. Cuthbert.

When the Synod at Whitby decided the future course of the Saxon Church in favor of Roman usage, St. Cuthbert accepted the ruling, and was sent by St. Eata to be prior of the celebrated monastery of Lindisfarne, that he might introduce the Roman customs there. This was no easy task. But his gentle tact overcame all difficulties, while his submission and sanctity did much to uphold the cause of St. Wilfrid the Elder.

His devotion to the Holy Sacrifice was so intense that he could not celebrate the Sacred Mysteries without shedding copious tears. During life, as well as after death, he wrought numerous miracles. Desirous of greater perfection, we find him in 676 retiring to a little spot on Farne Island, near Howburn, now known as "St. Cuthbert's Cave." Here he practiced great austerities and spent long vigils in prayer. The synod of bishops, under St. Theodore of Canterbury, which met at Twyford in Northumbria, elected him to the see of Lindisfarne. He yielded to their decision most reluctantly, and was finally consecrated bishop of York at Easter in 685, by St. Theodore himself, in the presence of six bishops. For only two years did he exercise his charge, but it was with extraordinary results.

"Now Cuthbert was so skillful in teaching," writes Bede, "so affectionate in his persuasions, and had so angelic a light beaming from his countenance, that none dared conceal from him the secrets of their hearts, but they confessed openly what they had done, for they were convinced that nothing could be concealed from him, and they expiated the faults they had confessed by worthy fruits of penance, according as he imposed them. He was also wont to seek out and preach in those remote villages which were situated far from the world in wild mountain places and fearful to behold, and which, as well by their poverty as by their distance up the country, prevented intercourse between them and such as could instruct their inhabitants. He often remained a week, sometimes two or three, or even a whole month, without returning to his monastery, but dwelling in the mountains, called the people to heavenly things both by his preaching and his holy life."

At Christmas 685, St. Cuthbert was forewarned of his death. Worthily to prepare for the final summons, he retired again

to his little cell at Farne Island. After two months of solitude, he was seized with his last illness. During these trying days he was served by the monks of Lindisfarne. From abbot Herefrid he received the Last Sacraments. His farewell words as recorded by Bede are most touching: "Have peace," said he, "and divine charity ever amongst you; and when you are called upon to deliberate on your condition, see that you be unanimous in council. Let concord be mutual between you and other servants of Christ, and do not despise others who belong to the Faith and come to you for hospitality, but admit them familiarly and kindly; and when you have entertained them, speed them on their journey: by no means esteem yourselves better than the rest of those who partake of the Faith and mode of life. But have no communion with those who err from the unity of the Catholic Faith, either by keeping Easter at an improper time, or by their perverse life. And know and remember that if of two evils you are compelled to choose one, I would rather that you should take up my bones, and leave these places and reside wherever God may send you, than consent in any way to the wickedness of schismatics, and so place a yoke upon your necks. Study diligently, and carefully observe the Catholic rules of the Fathers, and practice with zeal those institutes of the monastic life which it has pleased God to deliver to you through my ministry. For I know that although during my life some have despised me, yet after my death you will see what sort of man I was, and that my doctrine was by no means worthy of contempt."

Shortly after midnight he died, while the monks were saying psalms for him, and at the exact hour that his friend St. Herbert the hermit, expired. This St. Cuthbert had foretold. He was buried in the monastery at Lindisfarne. Soon his tomb became a place of pilgrimage and the scene of numberless miracles. The body of St. Cuthbert, "the wonder-worker of England," was exhumed in 698, and found incorrupt. During the Danish invasion of 875, the monks fled with their precious relics. After wandering around Northumbria, they finally deposited the remains near Durham in 883. Toward the end of the tenth century his shrine was removed to Ripon. In

1104 the body was once more transferred to the present cathedral of Durham.

Besides being an apostle, St. Cuthbert was an educator, disseminating throughout the land that culture and refinement whereby the Church of Rome civilized Europe.

St. Wilfrid of York deserves prominent mention in this sketch not only because he was one of Anglo-Saxon England's most conspicuous educators, but also because his useful life was guided and influenced by able women. He sprang from Northumbrian royalty, was born about 634, and died at Oundle, in Northamptonshire in 709. The unkindness of a stepmother made his early life very unhappy, so when fourteen years of age, he was sent to the court of Oswy, king of Northumbria. His striking personality soon attracted the attention of his royal mistress. At his own request he was sent by Queen Eanfleda to the monastery at Lindisfarne. Here he spent three years, at the end of which time, owing to the kindly solicitude of the queen, he was given the advantage of foreign travel. With feminine insight, she appreciated his talents, and caused him to accompany Benedict Biscop on his journey to Rome. While in the Eternal City, Wilfrid became the pupil of Boniface, the Pope's arch-deacon. Before returning to England, he spent three years at Lyons, where he received the tonsure. Annemundus, the Lyonesse bishop, tried to persuade him to remain in Lyons and marry his niece. But Wilfrid's strong will easily resisted the flattering temptation.

Shortly after, a persecuton broke out in Lyons. Annemundus perished, and it was only because of Wilfrid's nationality that he was allowed to return to England. Alchfrid, Oswy's son and heir, immediately bestowed upon him the monastery at Ripon, where he at once established the Benedictine Rule in full vigor. After five years at Ripon, Wilfrid was ordained a priest. He was most active in introducing everywhere Roman rites and customs. It was to settle many of these questions that the Synod of Whitby was convened, and it was owing chiefly to Wilfrid's influence that it pronounced in favor of the Roman mission.

This Synod was held in 664 at St. Hilda's abbey, and she herself took an active part in its important proceedings. Vener-

able Bede gives a minute account of what transpired. While some minor points of ecclesiastical discipline were decided, the principal question debated was the date for the observance of Easter. In Northumbria Celtic traditions were followed. Consequently, King Oswy and his household were celebrating Easter, while his queen, who followed the Roman system of the south, was still fasting. King Oswy was present at the Synod, with Bishops Colman and Chad, to represent the Celtic customs handed down to them by St. Aidan. Alchfrid, son of Oswy, and Bishops Wilfrid and Agilbert advocated the adoption of the Roman cycle. Colman appealed to the practice of St. John, Wilfrid to St. Peter and the Council of Nicea. Finally Oswy determined not to offend St. Peter. "I dare not longer," he said, "contradict the decrees of him who keeps the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven, lest he should refuse me admission." Thus was decided not only the question of the paschal cycle, but whether the Church in England "should link her fortunes with those of the declining and loosely compacted Irish church, or with the rising power and growing organization of Rome."

In chagrin and disappointment, Colman and his monks withdrew from Northumbria. With the Synod of Whitby ended the Irish-Scotch mission which for twenty-nine years had been the leading force in civilizing northern and central England.

Wilfrid's eventful life seems to be a succession of wanderings, exiles, and hair-breadth escapes. He was elected bishop in Colman's place, and gave further offense to the northern bishops by going over to France and being consecrated in Compiègne. Again he delayed on French soil, until 666. A violent storm shipwrecked his vessel, and he was landed on the Sussex coast, where he was almost killed by the barbarian inhabitants. Finally he reached Kent and made his way to Northumbria, only to find St. Chad ruling in his place. But he prudently withdrew to his monastery of Ripon which he made the headquarters for his missionary labors in Mercia and Kent.

Archbishop Theodore visited Northumbria in 669, and made St. Chad realize his precarious position. At once St. Chad withdrew. Again Wilfrid came unto his own loved diocese of York. With renewed vigor he carried on his work of Romanizing the

ecclesiastical life of his vast province. Magnificence marked all that he did, as is testified by Yorkminster which he rebuilt.

Everything went well for awhile, that is so long as Oswy lived. It was quite natural that the new king Egfrid would have little love for a man who had robbed him of his bride. When, through the influence of Wilfrid, the lovely Etheldreda left Egfrid, and retired to her monastery, the fate of the energetic archbishop of York was sealed. Just at this time, Archbishop Theodore proceeded to divide the archdiocese of York into three suffragan sees, those of Lindisfarne, Hexham, and Witherne. Wilfrid resented the action of Canterbury, affirming that Theodore was overstepping his authority. To this Theodore replied by consecrating three bishops for the new sees in Wilfrid's own church at York, and dividing the entire archbishopric among them.

The intrepid archbishop of York appealed immediately to Rome and presented his case in person to the Holy See. A council held by Pope Agatho decided the case in Wilfrid's favor. Rome required the intruding bishops to be removed, Wilfrid was to appoint his own suffragan bishops, and subdivide the archdiocese. But the Northumbrian king declared he had bribed Rome for the favorable decision. Wilfrid was imprisoned for a time, then banished into exile, and finally found himself again in Sussex. His zeal found an outlet at Selsey.

After five years of missionary labor, we are relieved to hear of a reconciliation between Wilfrid and Theodore in 686. Northumbria had a new king in the person of Aldfrid, who through Theodore's persuasion, allowed Wilfrid once more to return to his native soil. He took possession of the diocese of Hexham, and after a short time, filled again the episcopal chair of York. But standing by his colors, he refused to recognize what had been done by Theodore and annulled by Rome. This caused difficulties with the king. And for the third time Wilfrid went to Rome, and was again victorious. After the lengthy proceedings at the Papal court, Wilfrid returned to England, was reconciled with Archbishop Brihtwald, Canterbury's new occupant, and at the special Synod convened by him, modestly accepted the sees of Hexham and Ripon. York he never regained.

In Wilfrid we see a precursor of Becket, who four centuries

later was to lay down his life, after a similar struggle for a similar cause.

Wilfrid fought hard, and in seeming defeat, conquered. To him, more than to any other single individual, is due the distinction of establishing Roman authority on British soil. With that authority, came all that Rome stood for, its art, its literature, its education, its culture. In all this, consciously, or unconsciously, Anglo-Saxon women played no small part. An unkind stepmother bent the lad's steps toward Lindisfarne. A kind queen directed him to Rome. And equally kind friends he found among the nuns of Whitby Abbey. St. Hilda and her companions always held out to the sturdy defender of Rome's authority, the help and comfort needed by every strong man in his struggle for right.

Among the authors of Anglo-Saxon literature pre-eminence is given to Bede. And deservedly so, since to him we owe much of our knowledge of the history of this period. What he tells us, he received either from first hand sources or from those in a position to know the truth of what he asserts. In these pages we have frequently mentioned him, and as he was a disciple of St. John of Beverly, who studied under the guidance of St. Hilda, we may regard Bede as indebted in no small measure for his wealth of learning and virtue to the influence of the efficient abbess of Whitby.

Practically all that we know of the life of Bede has been told us by himself. He was born in 672, about eight years before the death of St. Hilda. He died in 735, having devoted fifty-two years to what he considered the most delightful of all pursuits, his own improvement and the instruction of his pupils. From this retiring student of the seventh and eighth centuries modern teachers may draw inspiration. "Because of his proficiency," says Alcuin, "he was rightly made master" of the monastic school.

Writing in 731, when death was near, Bede tells us with a simplicity and piety characteristic of the truly learned: "Thus much concerning the ecclesiastical history of Britain, and especially of the race of the English, I, Bede, a servant of Christ, and priest of the monastery of the blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, which is at Wearmouth and at Jarrow (in Northum-

berland), have with the Lord's help composed so far as I could gather it either from ancient documents or from the traditions of the elders, or from my own knoweldge. I was born in the territory of the said monastery, and at the age of seven I was, by the care of my relatives, given to the most reverend abbot Benedict, and afterwards to Ceolfrid, to be educated. From that time I have spent the whole of my life within that monastery devoting all my pains to the study of the Scriptures, and to the observance of monastic discipline and the daily charge of singing in the church. It has been ever my delight to learn or teach or write. In my nineteenth year I was admitted to the diaconate, in my thirtieth to the priesthood, both by the hands of the most reverend Bishop John, and at the bidding of the abbot Ceolfrid. From the time of my admission to the priesthood to my present fifty-ninth year, I have endeavored for my own use and that of my brethren, to make brief notes upon the Holy Scripture, either out of the works of the venerable Fathers or in conformity with their meaning and interpretation." Then after giving a list of his other writings, Bede concludes his monumental work with the words: "And I pray thee, loving Jesus, that as thou hast graciously given me to drink in with delight the words of thy knowledge, so thou wouldst mercifully grant me to attain one day to thee, the fountain of all wisdom, and to appear forever before thy face."

How deeply Bede was loved by his own community is shown by the account of his last sickness and death which has been left to us by his disciple Cuthbert. Even during the closing days of his life, his literary labors were not relinquished. "I can with truth declare," writes Cuthbert, "that I never saw with my eyes or heard with my ears anyone return thanks so unceasingly to the living God." On the eve of his death, the vigil of the Ascension 735, he was still busy translating. Up until the very end he was a schoolmaster, helping and encouraging his pupils.

Two of his books are text books, the *Orthography* and *Proseody*. The latter is a treatise on the figures of speech, principally those found in Holy Scripture. These were written when Bede was about thirty. So that during his long teaching life he was able to help in a very material way contemporary men and

women teachers who, under his leadership, were laboring to raise the standard of scholarship among religious and seculars. Lying on the floor of his cell, singing "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost," Bede peacefully breathed his last.

His history shows how intimately he was connected with the women of his day. Indeed, without Venerable Bede's painstaking account of his female contemporaries, we should know little or nothing of these noble women. He shares their anxieties and sorrows. He helps and encourages their plans. He is as familiar with their domestic life, as with their intellectual ambitions. He most carefully narrates miraculous aid rendered by the saintly John of Beverly toward Coenberg, the daughter of abbess Hereberga, at Wetadun. The grievous distemper, he says, fell upon her whilst she was engaged in study. And the intensely human element is not lacking, for when the fair student was cured, she offered refreshments to her guests. Scholar and author as he was, Bede was sympathetic, affectionate and thoroughly human.

Shortly after his death, popular sentiment accorded to Bede the title of Venerable. Alcuin, Amalarius, and Paul the Deacon, use it when speaking of him. In 835, at the Council of Aachen, he is referred to as *venerabilis et modernis temporibus doctor admirabilis Beda*. Cardinal Wiseman in 1859 petitioned the Holy See to make Bede a Doctor of the Church. But it was not until November 13, 1899, that Leo XIII decreed that the feast of Venerable Bede with the title of *Doctor Ecclesiae* should be celebrated each year throughout the church on May 27.

The influence of Bede on English and foreign learning is of paramount importance. He was undoubtedly the most learned man of his age, "the flower of Benedictine scholarship." For erudition and culture he stands head and shoulders over all his contemporaries. Even a casual reader of his works will notice his scrupulosity in verifying his references, and acknowledging his indebtedness to any authority from whom he has borrowed. Exalted as was his standard of scholarship, Bede repeatedly tells us that all his studies were subordinated to the interpretation of Scripture. In his *De Schematibus* he asserts "Holy Scripture is above all other books, not only by its author-

ity, because it is divine, or by its utility, because it leads to eternal life, but also by its antiquity and by its literary form." The purity of his diction, the lucidity and sobriety of his style give his works a high literary value. . . . In all truth we can say that Venerable Bede exemplifies the sacred and secular lore acquired in Whitby Abbey under the auspices of St. Hilda.

With Bede the student of history naturally associates Alcuin, his literary inheritor at York. He was born about 735, and died May 19, 804. The exact place of his birth is disputable, but we know he boasted of his Northumbrian parentage. When very young Alcuin entered the cathedral school founded at York by Archbishop Egbert. His talent and piety attracted the attention of his teacher Aelbert, as well as that of the archbishop. Special care was given to his education by his masters. While yet a mere youth, Alcuin made with them several visits to the continent. In 767 the duties of the archbishopric of York fell to Aelbert, and Alcuin took up the labors of directing the school. For fifteen years he devoted himself to the arduous duties of teaching. Under his judicious management, the school at York attained the pinnacle of its fame. Numerous students were attracted not only by its valuable library, but by the solidity of the instruction acquired within its walls.

Alcuin himself has left us in a rhythmical catalogue a list of the principal books treasured in the famous York library:

"There shalt thou find the volumes that contain
All of the ancient fathers who remain;
There all the Latin writers make their home
With those that glorious Greece transferred to Rome,
The Hebrews draw from their celestial stream,
And Africa is bright with learning's beam.

"Here shines what Jerome, Ambrose, Hilary thought,
Or Athanasius and Augustine wrought.
Orosius, Leo, Gregory the Great,
Near Basil and Fulgentius coruscate.
Grave Cassiodorus and John Chrysostom,
Next Master Bede and learned Aldhelm come,
While Victorinus and Boëthius stand
With Pliny and Pompeius close at hand.

"Wise Aristotle looks on Tully near,
 Sedulius and Juvenecus next appear.
 Then come Albinus, Clement, Prosper, too,
 Paulinus and Arator. Next we view
 Lactantius, Fortunatus. Ranged in line
 Virgilius Maro, Statius, Lucan shine.
 Donatus, Priscian, Probus, Phocas start
 The roll of masters in grammatic art.
 Eutychius, Servius, Pompey, each extend
 The list. Comminian brings it to an end.

"There shalt thou find, O reader, many more
 Famed for their style, the masters of old lore,
 Whose many volumes singly to rehearse
 Were far too tedious for our present verse."

Remembering the value of a single book in those days, we need not wonder that the library of York, with its volumes numbered in the hundreds, was considered marvellous. On its shelves was preserved all the learning of the day. Knowledge is like a vast treasury whose wealth is increased yearly by human endeavor. Civilization at that time had not yet emerged into adolescence, yet succeeding years wonder at the solidity of the work done, and the results achieved in Anglo-Saxon institutions of learning.

The education which Alcuin transmitted to his scholars was the same that he had received from his own master Egbert. "My master Egbert," he wrote, "often used to say to me that it was the wisest of men who discovered the arts, and it would be a great disgrace to allow them to perish in our day. But many are now so pusillanimous as not to care about knowing the reasons of the things the Creator has made. Thou knowest well how agreeable a study is arithmetic, how necessary it is for understanding the Holy Scriptures, and how pleasant is the knowledge of the heavenly bodies and their courses, and yet there are few who care to know such things."

After telling us that Aelbert became a deacon, then priest, and finally a colleague of the venerable Archbishop Egbert, to whom he was nearly related by bonds of blood, "Aelbert did not disdain the labors of 'master in the city'" (of York), says Alcuin.

"There he moistened thirsty hearts with diverse streams of teaching and the varied dews of learning, giving to some the art of the science of grammar, pouring on others the rivers of the tongue of orators; these he polished on the whetstone of law, those he taught to sing together in Aeonian chant, making others play on the flute of Castaly, and run with the feet of lyric poets over the hills of Parnassus. Others the said master made to know the harmony of heaven, the labours of sun and moon, the five belts of the sky, the seven planets, the laws of stars, the rising and falling of the wind, the movements of the sea, the earth's quake, the nature of men, cattle, birds, and beasts, and divers kinds of numbers, and various shapes. He gave certainty to the solemnity of Easter's return.

"Above all, he taught theology, opening the mysteries of Holy Writ, and disclosing the abysses of the rude and ancient law. Whatever youths he saw of eminent intelligence, those he joined to himself, he taught, he fed, he loved. And so the teacher had many disciples in the sacred volumes, advanced in various arts."

From the canon law of 832, we may infer that the school master held one of the most important officers of the minster. "There is perhaps no more illuminating passage in early English history than these references of Alcuin to the school of York," says Arthur Leach.

Although the attendance at York school was so large, we know the names of only a few of Alcuin's pupils. One of them was Luidger who came from the continent, and afterwards became the first bishop of Munster in Saxony. Among the others, Anglo-Saxons, we recognize Eanbald, a future archbishop of York; Witzo, Fridugis, and Sigulf, who went with him to Frankland; Osulf, the delinquent, who cost him so many tears and prayers; Onias, Calvinus, Raganhard, and Waldramn, and Fosepg, known to us only by name.

Coming into contact with so many as a teacher, Alcuin certainly exerted an influence, either directly or indirectly, on the education of the women of his time. Unlike many of his predecessors in the educational world, we have no close correspondence of his with Anglo-Saxon women. But in 782 he entered upon his intellectual career in Frankland, and there as we shall

see, at the court of Charles the Great, women were in daily attendance at his lectures. They became, moreover, a prominent, influential factor in his life abroad. The culture Alcuin took to Aachen was Anglo-Saxon, his learning was that familiar to Hilda at Whitby, Hildelitha at Barking, Tetta at Winbourne, and the numerous other intellectual women residing at centres of female education in England during the so-called "dark ages."

In the system of education propagated by the saintly Theodore, religious knowledge and moral improvement were considered the two great aims of study. Hence theology, the queen of sciences, was given most attention. It was not reserved for clerics alone. Women and laymen were encouraged to taste its sweets. The Anglo-Saxons drew their theological knowledge exclusively from the Sacred Writings or works of the Fathers of the Church. From their very infancy Holy Scripture was the food of their souls. Among the Fathers, they were quite naturally attracted toward St. Gregory the Great. He it was who sent the Anglo-Saxons their first books. Gratitude prompted them to admire and imitate his writings, and to follow his interpretations. When in their turn, the Anglo-Saxons went to teach and evangelize in France and Germany, they widely propagated in these regions the writings of him who has been so justly called the "The Apostle of England."

According to Alcuin, the chief exponent of Saxon learning, a liberal education should comprise grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrology. After theology, students of this period applied themselves to philosophy. For their guide they took Aristotle, whom Averroes centuries afterward called "the master of them who know." They were taught the laws of valid reasoning and the art of detecting falsehood by committing to memory the categories, the laws of the syllogism, the various styles of argumentation, and the different classes of propositions. Alcuin divides his treatise on logic into five parts: *Isagogue*, *Categoriae*, *Syllogismi*, *Topica*, and *Perihermeniae*.

The science of numbers was considered important, but its acquisition was attended with many difficulties, since mathematicians of that day were limited to the Roman system of notation.

We who are familiar with the Arabic system can little appreciate the limitations which bounded all numerical calculation in the early centuries. Modern educators will smile at the manual arithmetic which received unstinted praise from no less an authority than Bede. In his treatise *De Indigitatione*, he tells us that numbers from 1 to 100 were expressed by the fingers of the left hand; from 100 to 10,000 by those of the right hand; from 10,000 to 100,000 by varying the position of the left; and from 100,000 to 1,000,000 by varying that of the right hand. This in itself was the beginning of a decimal system which must have facilitated calculation hitherto limited to the Roman characters, C, D, I, L, M, V, X. The Saxon system at least reveals ingenuity and independence of thought.

In the natural sciences the Anglo-Saxons followed Aristotle and Pliny. In these subjects they did but little original work. For an explanation of Genesis they were guided by the Fathers of the Church, and never dreamed of deviating in one iota from the theories of their progenitors in the Faith. But by their writings and transcriptions, the men and women of Anglo-Saxon times have preserved for us the doctrines of many who had gone before them in the vast field of knowledge.

CHAPTER VII

THE FINE ARTS

The chief intellectual labor of the monks and nuns was the tedious work of transcribing. "The monastic institute," says the biographer of St. Maurus, "demands *summa quies*," the most perfect quiet. It was this quiet which made possible that prodigious output of manuscripts which seems almost incredible to the modern mind. Dom François in his *Bibliothèque des Ecrivains Bénédictins*, says the historical writings of his Order constitute one of its chief claims, after its biblical works, on the gratitude of posterity. "This," he adds, "is the praise especially due to the monks, that they have illustrated Holy Scripture, rescued history, sacred and profane, from the barbarism of the times, and have handed down to posterity so many lives both of saints and bishops."

Speaking of the literary productions of this epoch, Dr. Maitland observes: "He who sees one copy of an edition now sees all. But in the 'Dark Ages' every copy was unique—every one, if I may so speak, stood upon its own individual character; and the correctness of a particular manuscript was no pledge for even those which were copied immediately from it. In fact, the correctness of every single copy could be ascertained only by minute and laborious collation, and by the same sort of tedious and wearisome process which is now required from the editor who, with infinitely more ease and better helps, revises the text of an ancient writer."²⁵

This was why a reliable book brought an extraordinary price in those days. Up to the seventh century only transcription was done. But when the art of illumination was introduced from Italy, English monasteries began to decorate their parchment. Books were written in blue and gold, bound elaborately in gold and silver, studded with precious gems, and sometimes inlaid with relics. Fire, war, famine, and plague caused these invaluable manuscripts to disappear. Sometimes the covers

²⁵ Maitland: *Dark Ages*.

were sold by charitable superiors of convents to relieve the sick and poor.

"About 790," says Warton, a non-Catholic writer, "Charlemagne granted an unlimited right of hunting to the abbot and monks of Sithi for making their gloves and girdles of the skins of the deer they killed, and *covers for their books*."

"Some of the houses ruled by women, like so many of those ruled by men, became important centres of culture, where the industrial arts were taught, and where books were prized, stored, and multiplied. Nuns as well as monks were busy transcribing manuscripts, a task as absorbing as it was laborious, for the difficulties in the way of learning to write can hardly be overestimated, considering the awkwardness of writing materials, and the labor involved in fabricating parchment, ink and pigment; but, as the old writer with a play on the words *Armarium*, bookcase, and *Armatorium*, armory, remarks, 'A monastery without its bookcase is what a castle is without its armory.' And all houses, whether for monks or nuns, take rank as centres of culture in proportion to their wealth in books."²⁶

An anonymous monk of Wessobrunn, has preserved an account of a nun whose labors are quite astonishing. She did the work of three men. The historian, who seems to have begun his work in the year 1513, says:

"Diemudis was formerly a most devout nun of this our monastery of Wessobrunn. For our monastery was formerly double, or divided into two parts,—that is to say, of monks and nuns. The place of the monks was where it now is; but that of the nuns where the parish church now stands. This virgin was most skillful in the art of writing. For though she is not known to have composed any work, yet she wrote with her own hand many volumes in a most beautiful and legible character, both for divine service and for the public library of the monastery, which are enumerated in a list written by herself in a certain plenarius. For in that list, the following books pertaining to divine service are enumerated:—

²⁶ Eckenstein: *Woman under Monasticism*.

A missal, with the Gradual and Sequences, which was given to the Bishop of Treves.

Another Missal, with the Epistles, Gospels, Gradual, and Sequences.

Another Missal, with the Epistles and Gospels for the whole year; and the Gradual and Sequences, and the entire service for Baptism.

A Missal with Epistles and Gospels.

A Book of Offices.

Another Book of Offices, with the Baptismal service, which was given to the Bishop of Augsburg.

A Book with the Gospels and Lessons.

A Book with the Gospels.

A Book with the Epistles.

“These books she wrote, as I have said, for the use and ornament of the divine service. With the following she adorned our library:—

A Bible in two volumes, which was given for the estate in Pisinberch.

A Bible in three volumes.

The Morals of St. Gregory, (that is, his commentary on Job), in six volumes, the first and third of which are lost.

St. Gregory ad Regaredum.

St. Gregory on Ezekiel, and some other things, in one volume.

Sermons and Homilies of Ancient Doctors, three volumes.

Origen on the Old Testament.
on the Canticles.

Augustine on the Psalms, three volumes.

on the Gospel and the first Epistle of St. John, two volumes; the first missing.

Epistles to the number of lxxv.

Treatises, ‘De verbis Domini,’ ‘De Sermone Domini in Monte,’ ‘De Opera Monachorum,’ and ‘De Agone Christiano,’ ‘De adorando,’ ‘De Professione Viduitatis,’ ‘De Bone Conjugali,’ ‘De Virginitate.’

St. Jerome’s Epistles, to the number of clxiv.

“The Tripartite History of Cassiodorus, (that is the com-

pendium of ecclesiastical history which he made, in the sixth century, from Epiphanius's Latin version, of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret.)

Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History.

St. Augustine, fifty sermons; the life of St. Sylvester; Jerome against Vigilantius; and the 'De Consolatione Mortuorum;' The life of St. Blaise; the Life of St. John the Almoner (Patriarch of Alexandria early in the seventh century).

"I presume from the way in which they are put together, that these formed only one volume, as also the following:—

Pachasius on the Body and Blood of Christ; the Conflict of Lanfranc with Berengarius; the Martyrdom of St. Dionysius; the Life of St. Adrian, pope, &c.

St. Jerome 'De Hebraicis Quaestionibus,' and many other works by him, and by other writers.

St. Augustine's Confessions.

Canons.

The Gloss, alphabetically arranged, (I suppose this is meant by 'Gloss per A. B. C. composita.').

"These are the volumes written with her own hand by the aforesaid handmaid of God, Diemudis, to the praise of God, and of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, the patrons of this monastery. But at what period she lived I could never discover, since, in all the books (we charitably hope from humility), she omitted to mention her name, and the time when she finished."

"That, however, which her anonymous biographer could not discover, Pez learned from a MS. account of the abbots of Wessobrunn, which he found in the neighboring monastery of Tegernsee. The author of it states that Diemudis lived in the time of Gregory VII, (who became pope in A. D. 1073)."²⁷

Looking over the books produced during this period one is inclined to think their character almost exclusively ecclesiastical—a striking contrast to the publications of our own time. "As regards those books which were considered the standard works

²⁷ Maitland: *Dark Ages*.

in sacred and secular literature, the difference," says Dr. Maitland, "between our times and the Dark Ages, was not so *extreme* as may have been supposed."

The name of St. Cuthbert is connected with two famous early copies of the Gospel. One known as the Lindisfarne or Cuthbert Gospels, is now preserved in the British Museum. It was written in the eighth century by Eadfrid, bishop of Lindisfarne. It contains the four Gospels with a number of valuable Anglo-Saxon glosses between the lines. Though it is written by an Anglo-Saxon hand, competent judges pronounce it old Irish calligraphy and illumination of high value. Since Lindisfarne was an Irish foundation, this is not surprising. It is one of the most splendid manuscripts in all Europe. Originally it was offered by its scribe as a tribute at the shrine of St. Cuthbert. The second Gospel text connected with him is a Gospel of St. John, a seventh century work, which was found in his grave in 1105. It is at present treasured by Stonyhurst College, England.

"The so-called dark ages, the centuries between 800 and 1200, cease to be dark as soon as one inquires into the contents of the monastic libraries, and the monotony of convent routine ceases to appear monotonous on entering one of the old treasuries and reflecting on the aims and aspirations which were devoted to producing this wealth in design and ornamentation, the bare fragmentary remains of which are to us of today a source of unending delight and wonder."²⁸

In ancient times monasteries were not only printing houses, but book binderies as well. "When the body of the text was finally ready, the sheets were passed to the corrector, who filled the office of the modern proof-reader, and from him to the rubricator, who inserted, in more or less elaborate designs, and in striking colors, the rubrics and initials for which space had been left by the scribe. The pieces of parchment were then passed to the binder, who, as a rule, placed four on each other and then folded them, the result being a quire of eight leaves or sixteen pages. The binding was generally strong and solid in character: leather was used for the back and wooden boards

²⁸ Eckenstein: *Woman under Monasticism*.

for the sides, which were usually covered with parchment of leather or velvet. Thus was established the form and fashion of the book as we know it, whether written or printed.

"Besides the book-form, parchment was also made up into rolls, which were especially used for chronological writings and deeds of various kinds.

"The cloister was the center of life in the monastery, and in the cloister was the workshop of the patient scribe. It is hard to realize that the fair and seemly handwriting of these manuscripts was executed by fingers which, on winter days, when the wind howled through the cloisters, must have been numbed by the icy cold. It is true that occasionally little *carrells* or studies in the recesses of the windows were screened off from the main walk of the cloister, and sometimes a small room or cell would be partitioned off for the use of a single scribe. This room would then be called the *scriptorium*, but it is unlikely that any save the oldest or most learned of the community were afforded this luxury. In these *scriptoria* of various kinds the earliest annals and chonicles in the English language were penned, in the beautiful and painstaking forms in which we know them.

"There is no evidence for the existence of buildings especially set apart for libraries until the later middle ages. Books were stored in presses, placed either in the church or in convenient places within the monastic buildings. These presses were then added to as need arose, or perhaps, a small room was set apart for the better preserving of the precious volumes. Books were frequently lost through the widespread system of lending both to private persons and to communities, and though bonds were solemnly entered into for their safe return, neither anathemas nor heavy pledges seemed sufficient to ensure the return of the volumes. But all losses through lending, or fire, or pillage, were as nothing compared with the utter ruin and destruction that overtook the literature of England, as represented by the written remains of its past, when the monasteries were dissolved. By what remains, we can estimate what we have lost, and lost irrevocably."²⁹

²⁹ *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. I.

The love of books entertained by Anglo-Saxon religious was well expressed toward the end of the twelfth century, by their fellow countryman, St. Hugh of Lincoln, when he wrote:

"When we are at peace, books are our treasures and delights; when we are fighting, they are our arms; when we are hungry, they are our food; when we are sick, they are our remedy. This is a resource which no religious men can afford to neglect; but those who need it most of all, are the monks who live in solitude."

Wattenback, an authority on manuscripts and the medieval art of writing, has preserved the names of many women mentioned as scribes. But we know that usually the transcribers sent out their labor anonymously. Much of the transcribing done by women is thus buried in oblivion. Still the little that remains shows no mean talent in calligraphy and miniature painting.

Among the Teutonic races, the chief manual occupation of womankind was weaving. This is attested both by mythology and tradition. In the primeval ages, domestic work was the only occupation of women. But on their conversion to Christianity, a new element was introduced into their life.

With the introduction of the religious life, woman entered into the monasteries. There in the seclusion of the cloister, she became acquainted with letters, her mind was broadened, elevated, and refined. Classical learning, with all its wealth of culture, was hers. She became learned as well as literary.

It was the clergy who by their influence finally succeeded in weakening the power of father and husband over daughter and wife. So industrious were the Anglo-Saxon women that we find Archbishop Theodore about the middle of the seventh century, explicitly forbidding women to engage on Sunday in weaving, or in cleaning vestments, or in sewing them, or in carding wool, or in beating flax, or in washing garments, or in shearing the sheep, or in other such like employments.

Anglo-Saxon women greatly distinguished themselves in weaving church hangings, and embroidered altar linen and vestments. Bock, in his exhaustive treatise on ecclesiastical furniture, praises most highly the art and industry of the nuns. After recognizing their efficiency in weaving, he goes on to speak of

their talent in embroidery. "This art also," he says, "was chiefly cultivated in religious houses by pious nuns up to the twelfth century. The inmates of women's establishments were especially devoted to working decorations for the altar. Their peaceful seclusion was spent in prayer and in doing embroidery. What work could seem worthier and nobler than artistic work intended for the decoration of the altar? It is in the nunnery that the art of design as well as the technique of weaving were brought to their highest perfection." Of course only a tiny fragment of the work accomplished in these branches of art has been preserved for posterity. Time and pillage have robbed us of the invaluable products of feminine medieval industry.

The artistic tendency cultivated in the convents passed into the homes of seculars. The badges and standards worked by women during the ages of romance were probably due to conventual development of artistic talent.

"No foundation is to be met with which was not for monks as well as for nuns, a house of education, in the first place for the adults, who formed its first nucleus, and afterward for the young people who crowded around them. Thus were trained the cultivated nuns who quoted Virgil in writing to St. Boniface, and too often added Latin verses of their own fashion to their prose; who copied for him the works he had need of, now the Epistles of St. Peter in gilded letters, now the Prophets written large to suit his weak sight; who consoled and nourished him in his exile, by the abundance and beauty of the books they sent him; and among whom he found those illustrious fellow-workers whom one of his biographers declares to have been deeply versed in all liberal studies, and who lent so stout a hand in the conversion of the Germans."³⁰

The pen, the brush, and the needle, all helped to make that "*opus anglicum*" which aroused the envy of Pope Innocent IV. It was worked in colored floss silk, interwoven with threads of silver and gold, the whole forming beautiful figures on precious material, usually linen. At times even jewels were used in the execution.

³⁰ Montalembert: *Monks of the West*.

A brilliant example of the "*opus anglicum*" is a cope, nine feet seven by four feet eight. The descriptive catalogue of the South Kensington Museum states, "It may have been worked by the nuns of some convent in or near Coventry." "This handsome cope," says Dr. Bock, "so very remarkable on account of its perfect preservation, is one of the most beautiful among the several liturgic vestments of the olden period anywhere now to be found in Christendom."

Speaking of the inmates of the monasteries at this period, Cram, a non-Catholic author, may seem extravagant to a modern reader, when he says. "They undertook the education of children, the preparation of candidates for Holy Order, the medical service of the neighborhood, and relief of the poor, the entertainment of travellers. They were the teachers of the agricultural population in all things pertaining to their industry. They were themselves great producers of grain and wool. They employed large numbers in building, printing, carving, and bell-founding. They were the fosterers of architecture, painting, sculpture, illumination, embroidery, gold-smithery, and organ building."

Among its many artistic treasures, Stonyhurst College, England, can boast of the exquisite stole of St. Cuthbert, which Father Bridgett says is the most important and authentic example of early church embroidery now in existence. This stole when found was in five pieces. An inscription worked upon it attests that it was made for Bishop Frithestan of Winchester, by order of Queen Aelfled, wife of Edward the Elder. Hence it must have been wrought between 905 and 916. It reveals the talent, time and expense lavished on ecclesiastical ornaments.

CHAPTER VIII

ANGLO-SAXON INFLUENCE IN GERMANY

Not unlike their Celtic neighbors, as soon as the Anglo-Saxons were established in Christianity, they desired to share their treasure with less fortunate nations. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the missionary spirit was lively among the English. As early as 716, the Benedictine monk Winfrid, fired with zeal to spread the Gospel teaching, left his abbey in Nutsell, Hampshire, and passed into Friesland. He was well equipped for the work he set out to do. He was not only familiar with Holy Scripture, but he was a master of history, grammar, rhetoric, and poetry. His reputation for learning was widespread, for he shared his knowledge with the gentler sex as well as with his fellow-monks. He seems to have had a peculiar power of making and keeping friends, in spite of time and distance.

The material and spiritual encouragement he received from his contemporaries in England, helped him much in his heroic work among the German people. To them he is known as St. Boniface. When he first entered Germany, he found that St. Willibrod and St. Wigbert had already preached the Faith there. Because of political reasons, he returned to England for a short time. He then made a pilgrimage to Rome, where Pope Gregory II received him kindly, and gave him full authority to preach to the Germans on the right of the Rhine. He then went to Friesland where he found an affinity of language which greatly helped him. He was soon joined in his missionary labors by many from his native land. Conspicuous among them were Buchard, Lullus, Willibald, and Winibald. The two last were relatives of Boniface, probably his nephews.

St. Boniface and his companions at once began to institute the monastic life among their disciples at Fulda. Colleges and seminaries were founded throughout the territory. Under the patrimony of Charles Martel, learning and piety took root among the people. That this learning was such as existed in England, we have no doubt. Neither do historians dispute the fact that St. Boniface was aided powerfully in the dissemina-

tion of knowledge by the cultured nuns whom he brought over from England to help educate the young who flocked to the monastic schools in such large numbers. It was to Winbourne he looked for assistance in 748, and he looked not in vain. He was sent the cream of the community in the persons of Lioba, Thecla, Walburga, Chuni-hild, and Chunitrude. The two first named were related to Archbishop Boniface, while Walburga was the sister of St. Willibald. More than thirty volunteered for the foreign mission, and promptly set sail for Antwerp. They had a stormy voyage, but were met at Maintz by their zealous archbishop.

The monks and nuns in olden days displayed foresight and elegant taste in the selection of the sites for their monasteries. Bischofsheim, where St. Boniface settled St. Lioba, was no exception. Soon her spiritual and intellectual ascendancy asserted itself, and a few years found her surrounded with a numerous band of followers, who shared and propagated her labors. Thecla was appointed abbess of Kitzingen, where "she shone like a light in a dark place." Walburga went on to her brother in Thuringia. Here at a place called Heidensheim, in 752, he built a double monastery for himself and his saintly sister. It was in the midst of a forest, which ere long blossomed like the rose. A Christian population grew round about the monastery. The arts and sciences were taught within its walls. Heidensheim soon became famous as a centre of culture throughout the land.

An Anglo-Saxon nun in Germany at this time, who is considered by some to be identical with St. Walburga, the sister of St. Willibald, gives us an interesting account of his life and journey to Palestine. It is one of the earliest descriptions written in northern Europe of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and is therefore valuable for students of literature. In spite of her unclassical Latin, this literary nun attracts us by the lucidity of her style, and the accuracy of her narration. In this she differs from Sir John Mandeville. She is the last nun of whom we hear among the companions of St. Boniface.

Among the religious women in Germany during this period, we notice a singularly prominent literary talent which led to an independence of thought, and a freedom of expression in

their writings not found in their more reserved Anglo-Saxon sisters. Mabillon praises their learning, and the zeal with which they employed it for the benefit of their neighbors. Speaking of the German nuns of the tenth century, who inherited their intellectual tendencies from the nuns brought to Germany by St. Boniface, he says that, "moved by a laudable emulation, they devoted themselves to the labor of study and the transcription of books with no less energy than the monks." He mentions especially the nuns of Eiken, who spent their time in reading, meditating, transcribing, and painting. The two abbesses, Harlinda, and Renilda, we know wrote out the Psalter, the four Gospels, and many other books of Holy Scripture, which they adorned with liquid gold, and inlaid with precious gems. This art had been introduced into Germany by the cultured nuns who came to help Boniface accomplish the great work which he sealed with his life's blood.

"On June 5, 754, after Boniface had worked for two years along the Zuiderzee, when he was at Dockum, awaiting converts who were to be confirmed, a band of savages attacked him and his followers: they were all slain; the books he had with him were found and taken to Fulda, and thither also, after some time at Utrecht, was carried the body of the saint himself: there in the house of his founding, near the middle of his vast field of toil, the great hero lay at rest. He had done much to bind together a growing world, and to direct its ways. His letters with their eager interest in the past, with their requests for books, the Scriptures, commentaries, parts—even particles—of the many books of Bede, with their Latin verses, traced the outlines of medieval learning, and opened up channels along which medieval scholarship was long to flow. The many activities of his busy life must not hide his great services to learning. Sometimes when the 'vineyard he had dug brought forth only wild grapes,' and disappointments from half-heathen converts and wholly unworthy priests came thick upon him, he turned to study for rest and peace. Even when he was 'an old man, buffeted by the waves of the German sea,' and from dimness of eye could not read the small running hand of the day, he wrote to England for clearly written books. His connection with England meant much, and when he died, Arch-

bishop Cuthbert wrote to Lul that an English Synod 'lovingly placed him among the splendid and glorious doctors of the faith,' and 'along with Blessed Gregory and Augustine had taken him for their patron saint'."

"The greatness of his work was seen even more in its endurance than in its variety or its extent. He had visions of what he was to do, and he also saw the lines upon which alone it could be done. The Frankish empire, the papal supremacy, monastic foundations, ecclesiastical organizations, were perhaps the four greatest features of the medieval world. Each of these was built up by Boniface into the work of his life. He must have seen what each of them would be and would accomplish. But his farsightedness, his enthusiasm, and his wisdom can not fully explain all that he was and all he did. For that we must go to his letters: in them we see his power of friendship, his command of detail, and his breadth of view. In them we see how the great man grew with the very greatness of his work, until the young Englishman, with the zeal of his nation's new-found faith upon him, became the shaper of the mighty German West."³¹ But he did not the work alone. Like another St. Paul, he had fellow-laborers in the Gospel, earnest women and ardent men to further his undertaking.

In all probability, it was through the influence of the descendants of St. Boniface and his Anglo-Saxon nuns in Germany, that so high a standard of literary work was accomplished in Gandersheim during the tenth century. This monastery was one of the oldest and wealthiest in all Saxony. It nestled in the midst of the Hartz mountains in Eastphalia. Like all monasteries, for economic purposes, it was near a plentiful supply of water. It was surrounded by low-lying ground near the Ganda river. The great Saxon duke, Liudolf founded it at the request of his Frankish wife Oda.

The first abbess of Gandersheim was Hathumod. Her life was written by the monk Agius. The elegy he has left us on her death is both touching and enlightening. In it, while trying to comfort the Sisters for the loss they have sustained, he voices his own grief, and reveals his filial love for the de-

³¹ *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II.

ceased abbess. A century after, the gifted nun Hroswitha, the first German poetess, employed her talent in telling the story of Gandersheim's revered foundress. The monastery was established about 852. Agius emphasizes the gentle, dignified bearing of Hathumod, and her extraordinary literary attainments. "No one could have shown a greater quickness of perception, or a stronger power of understanding in listening to or in expounding the Scripture," he asserts. She died at the early age of thirty-two, and was succeeded by Gerberg, and then by Christine. These first three abbesses of Gandersheim are considered by the historian Kopke, to be the most influential advocates of culture in Saxony during the ninth century.

In the early years of the tenth century the monastery had for abbess a certain Hroswitha who wrote treatises on logic and rhetoric. They are, unfortunately, not extant. From 959 to 1001 the monastery was ruled by a second Gerberg, a niece of Otto II. She is famous for being the teacher, friend and patron of Hroswitha, the poetess. Gerberg was probably the most accomplished woman of her time.

In Hroswitha, literary critics see a connecting link between the comedies of classical times and the miracle plays. She occupies a position all her own in monastic life. Speaking of her productions, the litterateur Ebert says, "This fruitful poetic talent, which lacks not the inspiration and the courage of genius to enter upon new ground, evinces how the Saxon element was chosen to guide the German nation in the domain of art."

Some interpret the name of Hroswitha as *clamor validus* which is no doubt a reference to herself. By some she is spoken of as "the mighty voice," while others give her the more poetic appellation, "the nightingale of Gandersheim." On an old wood engraving, her name is "Helena von Rossow." She was probably of noble birth, born about 932, and entered the convent while quite young. Little is known of her early life. Her writings show that she knew much of the world before she became a nun. Her works may be classified under three groups: metrical legends, dramas, and metrical histories. Her legends and histories rank high with the productions of her contemporaries, but as a writer of Latin drama she stands alone.

Shortly after her death, Hroswitha's writings ceased to attract attention, and for five hundred years they were buried in oblivion. It was reserved for the poet laureate Conrad Celtes, the most brilliant stylist of the German Renaissance, to discover them in the Benedictine monastery of St. Emmeram at Ratisbon, in 1501. They appealed so powerfully to his humanistic mind, that he had them republished. For this he has strong claim on the gratitude of all true lovers of literature.

Hroswitha, the tenth-century *puella saxonica*, lived when Germany was under the Ottos, who gave new vigor to that imperialism and learning which had declined since the death of Charles the Great. At this time, Germany was enjoying comparative peace. The long sanguinary wars between the Franks and the Saxons had ceased. Germany for the first time was approaching national unity. The Saxon dukes had a firm hold on the crown. Enemies on the north and the south had been subdued. The court of the Ottos brought Germany into close contact with what was left at this time of Italian and Grecian culture. Bruno, the brother of Otto I, was the archbishop of Cologne. He was instrumental in bringing into the country artists and learned men from Constantinople. Otto II married a Greek, Theophano, and surrounded himself with Greek philosophers. All this helped to make Germany at this period, the strongest and most enlightened state in all Europe.

The intellectual culture thus revived found its most natural home in the cloisters where men and women enamored of learning transmitted their intellectual wealth to future generations.

With such an environment it is not surprising to see Hroswitha arise on the literary horizon possessing an education which bears favorable comparison with that of any modern educator. She knew her classics, and she knew her philosophy. While her logic is unfaltering, her ethics is sound. In her conceptions she handles very delicate questions with a freedom that is simply startling to the modern mind. But the chastity of her pen is untarnished by the slightest stain. We find her characters in very dangerous positions from which she extricates them with charming simplicity.

Under the guidance of her learned teacher Gerberg, Hroswitha mastered the contents of the library in her monastic home. From her allusions we may infer that she was acquainted with Virgil, Lucan, Horace, Ovid, Terrence, and probably Plautus. Among the Christian authors she was familiar with Prudentius, Sedulius, Fortunatus, Martianus Capella, and Boëthius.

Her first Latin verse was a life of the Virgin Mary, the materials for which she gathered from Holy Writ and the apocryphal Gospel of St. James. She tells the story in nine hundred lines of leonine hexameters, and closes her poem with a panegyric on Christ. In the introduction to the complete edition of her legendary poems, Hroswitha confesses her diffidence at writing in the beginning.

"Unknown to others, and secretly, so to speak, I worked by myself," she says. "Sometimes I composed, sometimes I destroyed what I had written to the best of my abilities and yet badly; I dealt with material taken from writings with which I became acquainted within the precincts of our monastery of Gandersheim through the help of our learned and kindly teacher Rikkardis, afterwards through that of others who taught in her place, and finally through that of the high-born abbess Gerberg, under whom I am living at present, who is younger in years than I am, but more advanced in learning as befits one of royal lineage, and who has introduced me to various authors whom she has herself studied with the help of learned men. Writing verse appears a difficult and arduous task especially for one of my sex, but trusting to the help of divine grace more than to my own powers, I have fitted the stories of this book to dactylic measures as best I could, for fear that the abilities that have been implanted in me should be dulled and wasted by neglect; for I prefer that these abilities should in some way ring the divine praises in support of devotion; the result may not be in proportion to the trouble taken and yet it may be to the profit of some."

Knowing full well the greatness of her task, she thus addresses the Blessed Virgin: "Well I know that the task of proclaiming thy merits exceeds my feeble strength, for the whole world could not celebrate worthily that which is a theme of

praise among the angels." To her life of the Virgin Mary, Hroswitha appended a poem of one hundred and fifty lines on the ascension of Christ. Material for this she gleaned from an old Latin translation from the Greek which John the Bishop had left.

After this she wrote the two legends of Gondolf and Pelagius. These were followed by *The Lapse and Conversion of Theophilus*. It is the earliest attempt, in German literature, to describe a pact with the devil. Commentators see in the play a precursor of Faust.

The conversion of Proterius by Basilius, the bishop of Caesarea, next occupied her ready muse. In its opening lines she begs that her readers "will not on account of her sex despise the woman who draws these straines from a fragile reed."

Her legend of the *Passion of Dionysius* is an abbreviated and altered form of the account written by Hilduin. The last legend she left is the *Passion of St. Agnes*, whose exquisite purity appealed strongly to the consecrated virgins of Gandersheim.

Ebert notes her masterly style, her skill in supplying what was wanting in earlier versions of the legends, her ready talent in rhyme and rhythm, the nobility of her conceptions, and the completeness of each legend as it left her facile pen.

Hroswitha's reasons for writing her dramas are best explained in her own words:

"There are many Christians, from whom we can not claim to be excepted, who because of their charm of finished diction, prefer heathen literature with all its hallowness, to our religious books; there are others who hold by the Scripture, and despise what is heathen, and yet eagerly peruse the poetic creations of Terrence; while delighting in his flow of language, they are all polluted by the godless contents of his works. Therefore, I, 'the well-known mouth-piece of Gandersheim,' have not hesitated in taking this poet's style as a model, and while others honor him by perusing his dramas, I have attempted, in the very way in which he treats of unchaste love among evil women, to celebrate according to my ability the praiseworthy chasteness of god-like maidens.

"In doing so, I have often hesitated with a blush on my cheeks through modesty, because the nature of the work obliged

me to concentrate my attention on and apply my mind to the wicked passion of illicit love and to the tempting talk of the amorous, against which we at other times close our ears. But if I had hesitated on account of my blushes, I could not have carried out my purpose, or have set forth the praise of innocence to the fulness of my ability. For in proportion as the blandishments of lovers are enticing, so much greater is the glory of our Helper in heaven, so much more glorious the triumph of those who prevail, especially where woman's weakness triumphs and man's shameless strength is made to succumb. Certainly some will allege that my language is much inferior, much poorer, and very unlike that of him whom I try to imitate. It is so. I agree with them. And yet I refuse to be reproached on this account as though I had meant to class myself with those who in their knowledge are so far above my insufficiency. I am not even so boastful as to class myself with the least of their pupils; all I am bent on is, however insufficiently, to turn the power of mind given to me to the use of Him who gave it. I am not so far enamored of myself that I should cease from fear of criticism to proclaim the power of Christ which works in the saints in whatever way He grants it. If any one is pleased with my work, I shall rejoice; but if on account of my unpolished language it pleases no one, what I have done yet remains a satisfaction to myself, for while in other writings I have worked, however insufficiently, only in heroic strophe, here I have combined this with dramatic form, while avoiding the dangerous allurements of the heathen."

We are bound to admire Hroswitha's independent and original attitude, when her virile mind set about this laborious task. In thus expounding the beauty of chaste love, she was only emphasizing the teaching of the Church of Rome all down the centuries.

The striking scenes of her *Dulcitus* make her a rival of Shakespeare. Her daring conceptions however fall far short of the English bard in execution. Hroswitha did with legends in the tenth century what the Elizabethan dramatists did with stories. She dramatized them with that strange combination of the comic and the tragic which makes her presentation wholly original.

Her dramas have been likened to snowdrops. "In the very midst of winter they lift their white heads, but they die long ere the advent of spring, and there is none to remember them." They are six in number, portraying the heroic, the romantic, the comic, and the tragic. In the long disquisitions of her last two plays Hroswitha reveals her scholastic training. The dramas were written principally to be read as their author avers, but their character and arrangement are such that they may easily be adapted to the stage.

Her last two works were the *Life of Otto I*, and an account of the foundation of the monastery of Gandersheim. The material for Otto's life she probably obtained from Gerberg. It can hardly be called a history of contemporary events. It is rather an account of the royal family. This lessens its historic value, although she alone of all chroniclers mentions the imprisonment and flight of Queen Adelheid, widow of the king of the Lombards, in Italy, previous to her second marriage, when she became the consort of Otto I. This poem exists at present only in a fragment of about nine hundred lines. Originally it is thought to have exceeded sixteen hundred lines in length.

In the history of Gandersheim we meet the most finished of all Hroswitha's compositions. Into it she has woven exquisite legends, and a detailed account of Duke Liudolf, his wife, and children. It immortalizes much of the ancient Frankish folklore, which so graphically portrays the early life of the people in those far-off days.

Hroswitha died about 1002, so that we see her life was lived during what we call the Anglo-Saxon period of English history. We admire her talent, and admire also the education which developed that talent. That education was certainly directed by the influence of the women who came to Boniface in Germany, from the Winbourne monastery in England. A Lioba, a Thecla, and a Walburga live again in a Rikkardis, a Gerberg, and a Hroswitha. There are no great gaps in human events. All history is a transition. As Pascal says: "The whole succession of men should be considered as one man who lives on and never ceases to learn." The intellectuality of the Anglo-Saxon nuns of the ninth century was increased and multiplied

by Hroswitha of the tenth, so that Hudson could say of her:

"It is on the literary side alone that Hroswitha belongs to the classic school. The spirit and essence of her work belong entirely to the middle ages, for beneath the rigid garb of a dead language beats the warm heart of a new era. Everything in her plays that is not formal but essential, everything that is original and individual, belongs wholly to the Christianized Germany of the tenth century. Everywhere we can trace the influence of the atmosphere in which she lived; every thought and every motive is colored by the spiritual conditions of her time. The keynote of all her works is the conflict of Christianity with paganism; and it is worthy of remark that in Hroswitha's hands Christianity is throughout represented by the purity and gentleness of women, while paganism is embodied in what she describes as 'the vigor of men (*virile robur*)'."³²

Another modern critic asserts: "Hroswitha has earned a place apart in the Pantheon of women poets and writers. She alone in those troublous times of the tenth century, recalls to our minds the existence of dramatic art; her name indeed deserves to be rescued from oblivion, and to become a household word."³³

We shall close our already lengthy list of religious women renowned for learning as well as for sanctity, with the name of Hildegarde of Bingen. Although she lived in the twelfth century, she may truthfully be regarded as an exponent of Anglo-Saxon education, since all her learning was acquired under women who were the product of those monasteries which had been established by Lioba, Thecla, and Walburga, and had given to the Teuton race a Hroswitha.

St. Hildegarde was born at Bockelheim on the Nahe in 1098. Her days were passed on the banks of the Rhine, then the great highway of Europe. It is surprising to learn that the weak, delicate child who at eight years of age was placed under the tutelage of Jutta, and found too frail to receive a liberal education, should in after years have for her friends and correspondents the powerful personages who formed the destiny of Church and State. She acquired only sufficient knowledge of

³² W. H. Hudson: *English Historical Review*, 1888.

³³ *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1896.

Latin to read the psalms of the Divine Office, which she chanted with the nuns. She became a professed Benedictine, and soon succeeded her teacher as superior over the community settled at Disenberg.

By what she considered a divine command, Hildegarde moved to Bingen on the left bank of the Rhine, where crowds of aspirants to the religious life flocked to her. She instituted the Benedictine Rule in its full vigor, despite many obstacles. It was not until middle life that she entered upon her career as seer and prophetess. Speaking of herself, she says: "Up to my fifteenth year I saw much, and related some of the things seen to others, who would inquire with astonishment whence such things might come. I also wondered, and during my sickness I asked one of my nurses whether she saw similar things. When she answered no, a great fear befell me. Frequently in my conversation, I would relate future things, which I saw as if present, but noting the amazement of my listeners, I became more reticent." When about forty, at the command of her superiors, she committed to writing what she had seen and heard. With the assistance of some of her more talented Sisters, she completed in six years a minute account of her mystical experiences.

St. Hildegarde's first and greatest work is *Scivias* (*Scire* or *vias Domini*). Its prophetic and admonitory tone are not unlike Ezekiel and the Apocalypse. It pictures God on His holy mountain with the human race at its base. It tells of the origin of man, his fall and redemption, the struggles of the human soul, the Sacrifice of the Mass, future events, the enemy of mankind, and the end of the world. Her *Liber Vitae Meritorum* was written between 1158 and 1163. It describes the life of Christian virtue and its opposite. All nature is depicted in the *Liber Divinorum Operum*. The starry heavens, the winds, the sea, animals, man, the entire universe tell of the supernatural in her visions. She describes them as coming from the hand of God, and says she, their contemplation should lead the soul back to God. Unconsciously Hildegarde was using the teleological argument to prove the existence of a Supreme Being. She left us nine essays, besides a vast number of homilies, explanations of the Gospel.

Her voluminous correspondence was addressed to a variety of individuals. She had written communications with Eugene III, Anastasius IV, Adrian IV, and Alexander III. King Conrad III and Emperor Frederick were among her royal correspondents. St. Bernard, ten archbishops, nine bishops, forty-nine abbots, and provosts of monasteries or chapters, twenty-three abbesses, many priests, teachers, monks, nuns, and religious communities are included in the list of those to whom she wrote words of counsel and comfort.

The life of St. Disibodus and of St. Rupert which St. Hildegarde claimed were the result of visions, have only legendary value. Critics are surprised at the *Lingua Ignota* she has left in manuscript. It occupies ten folio volumes, and gives us a list of nine hundred words of an unknown language, mostly nouns and a few adjectives, with a Latin, and sometimes a German explanation, together with an unknown alphabet of twenty-three letters. It is printed by Pitra. Scholars regard this work as invented by members of the convent for the purpose of secret communication.

While at Disenberg, the learned abbess gave much time and study to nursing. In fact, in all monasteries the sick both within and without the convent received intelligent and careful attention. This experience gave St. Hildegarde material for the most famous of her works, which makes her the patroness of all nurses and doctors in the Church. It consists of two treatises. The first was edited in 1533 by Schott at Strasburg under the title *Physica S. Hildegardis*. In 1858 Dr. Jessen found a manuscript of it in the library of Wolfenbittel. It consists of nine books, dealing with the medicinal properties of plants, elements, trees, stones, fishes, birds, quadrupeds, reptiles, and metals. The learned Virchow regards this work as an early "materia medica, curiously complete, considering the age to which it belongs." Haeser, in his history of medicine, emphasizes the importance of this treatise by saying "it contains descriptions of the medicinal properties of the best known animals, plants, and minerals together with directions how to improve accepted remedies against illness in man and beast." He accredits the book with historical value, because it is an independent German treatise based principally on popular ex-

perience, for in it the author makes use of no writer except Isidore of Seville. Jessen regards it in the same light.

From Copenhagen, Jessen succeeded in obtaining also a manuscript entitled *Hildegardis Curae et Causae*. On examining it, he felt satisfied that it is the second medical work of the saint. It is in five books, which discuss the general divisions of created things, the human body and its ailments, the causes, symptoms, and treatments of diseases.

During her early years at Rupertsberg, St. Hildegarde wrote about seventy poems and hymns. They reveal extraordinary poetical talent and exceptional powers of expression. Her musical conceptions were much above the ordinary. Quite recently a musical manuscript by St. Hildegarde has been discovered. Students lay special stress upon the beauty of its structure, its depth of feeling, lofty sentiment and bold modulation. At times its melodies closely resemble modern compositions. The educated listener will be captivated by the poetic emotion of this twelfth century music. The famous medieval codex of St. Hildegarde is preserved at Wiesbaden and hides many a treasure worth the seeking by our modern musical students.

St. Hildegarde's visitors were numerous, her journeys many. She lived in an age alive with historical interest, of which she forms a part not unimportant. She could claim the loyal friendship of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "the simple monk, clad in plain clothes, weakened by fasting," whose influence was felt throughout the world. That he ever visited her is doubtful. But he wrote to her often, and unhesitatingly accepted the divine origin of her writings.

St. Hildegarde lived till the advanced age of eighty-two. She died in 1178. At once efforts were made, but in vain, to obtain her official canonization. Still in spite of repeated failure to secure for her the honors of the altars, she is regarded as a saint in the Church. The Bollandists place her feast on September 17th.

CHAPTER IX

ALCUIN IN FRANKLAND

"The appearance of the Danes off the coast of England," says Newman, "the destroyers of religion and science, synchronizes with the rise of Charlemagne, the founder of modern civilization."

It is interesting to note that the birth of Charles the Great in 742 is almost coincident with the death of his illustrious grandfather, Charles Martel. His father Pepin immediately took the throne, and labored successfully at strengthening the bonds uniting Church and State. Death claimed him on September 24, 768, when his kingdom passed into the hands of his two sons, Charles and Carloman.

"At St. Denis, home of his childhood, Pepin died, not yet half through his fifties. His life, though short, was fruitful. Modern scholars are at one in thinking his fame unduly eclipsed by that of his successor. Nearly everything the son accomplished the father had begun. Vigorous, shrewd, persistent, practical, his own general and his own prime minister, relentless but not cruel, pious but never blindly so, able to plan, but able too to wait, Pepin bequeathed to Charles more than a kingdom and a policy. Even for his bodily strength and presence, his power of passion and his length of life, Charlemagne owed perhaps something to the stainless self-control as husband and as father which was Pepin's alone of all his line."³⁴

The long, eventful reign of Charles the Great interests us only in so far as he labored for the civilization and education of his numerous subjects. For nearly half a century he ruled as king of the Franks. During this time he conquered "the iron-hearted Saxons," made them Christians, and for them as well as for his many other newly-baptized subjects, were enacted laws which had a revolutionary effect on the morals of his friends and recent foes alike.

In the year 782, Alcuin of York responded to the invitation

³⁴ *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II.

of Charles, and was fully installed as master of the palace school at Aachen. With the advent of Alcuin into Frankland the torch of learning was carried across the English channel by Anglo-Saxon hands, and kept burning brightly for many generations among a people hitherto shrouded in the darkness of ignorance.

"The next eight years (782-790)" says Andrew F. West, "witnessed his (Charles the Great) continuous furtherance of Alcuin's educational projects, first in the narrower circle of the palace school, and then in the advancement of both higher studies and general rudimentary education throughout his kingdom."³⁵

In a certain sense, Charles made education secular. He transplanted it from the convents to the royal palace. He saw set up in the bishops' residences and in the monasteries, schools whose curricula he outlined. By Alcuin's advice, in 787, Charles issued instructions for the reform of the schools in his kingdom. This capitulary, couched in words which reveal the master mind of Alcuin, runs thus:

"Charles, by the grace of God, King of the Franks and of the Lombards, and Patrician of the Romans, to Baugulf, abbot, and to his whole congregation, and to the faithful committed to his charge:

"Be it known to your devotion, pleasing to God, that in conjunction with our faithful, we have judged it to be of utility that, in the bishoprics and monasteries committed by Christ's favor to our charge, care should be taken that there shall be not only a regular manner of life, and one conformable to holy religion, but also the study of letters, each to teach and learn them according to his ability and the divine assistance. For even as due observance of the rule of the house tends to good morals, so zeal on the part of the teacher and the taught imparts order and grace to sentences; and those who seek to please God by living aright should also not neglect to please Him by right speaking. It is written, 'by thine own words shalt thou be justified or condemned;' and although right doing be prefer-

³⁵ Andrew Fleming West. *Alcuin*.

able to right speaking, yet must the knowledge of what is right precede right action. Every one therefore should strive to understand what it is that he would fain accomplish; and this right understanding will be the sooner gained according as the utterances of the tongue are free from error. And if false speaking is to be shunned by all men, especially should it be shunned by those who have elected to be the servants of the truth. During past years we have often received letters from different monasteries informing us that at their sacred services the brethren offered up prayers on our behalf; and we have observed that the thoughts contained in these letters, though in themselves most just, were expressed in uncouth language, and while pious devotion dictated the sentiments, the unlettered tongue was unable to express them aright. Hence there has arisen in our minds the fear lest, if the skill to write rightly were thus lacking, so too would the power of rightly comprehending the Holy Scriptures be far less than was fitting, and we all know that though verbal errors be dangerous, errors of the understanding are yet more so. We exhort you, therefore, not only not to neglect the study of letters, but to apply yourselves thereto with perseverance and with that humility which is well-pleasing to God; so that you may be able to penetrate with greater ease and certainty the mysteries of the Holy Scriptures. For as these contain images, tropes, and similar figures, it is impossible to doubt that the reader will arrive far more readily at the spiritual sense according as he is the better instructed in learning. Let there, therefore, be chosen for this work, men who are both able and willing to learn, and also desirous of instructing others, and let them apply themselves to the work with a zeal equalling the earnestness with which we recommend it to them.

“It is our wish that you may be what it behooves the soldiers of Christ to be—religious in heart, learned in discourse, pure in act, eloquent in speech; so that all who approach your house in order to invoke the divine Master, or to behold the excellence of the religious life, may be edified in beholding you and instructed in hearing you discourse or chant, and may return home rendering thanks to God most High.

“Fail not, as thou regardest our favor, to send a copy of this letter to all thy suffragans and to all the monasteries; and let

no monk go beyond his monastery to administer justice or to enter the assemblies and the voting-place. Adieu."³⁶

"If only there were many who would follow the illustrious desire of your intent," wrote Alcuin to Charles at this time, "perchance a new, nay a more excellent Athens might be founded in Frankland; for our Athens, being enobled with the mastership of Christ the Lord, would surpass all the wisdom of the studies of the Academy. That was instructed only in the Platonic disciplines and had fame for its culture in the seven arts, but ours being enriched beyond this with the sevenfold plenitude of the Holy Spirit, would excel all the dignity of secular learning."

Alcuin was not working single-handed in this Frankish revival of learning. He had brought with him several of his Yorkshire pupils. Among them were Wizo, Fridugis, and Sigulf. Helpers also came from Ireland, truly the land of scholars at this period.

A pretty story, probably only legendary, but illustrative of Celtic sentiment in imparting knowledge, is told of Claud Clement and John Melrose. They arrived in the Frankish capital when Alcuin was already at Aachen. The people in the market were astonished to hear the Scottish strangers calling out, "If any one wants knowledge, let him come to us and get it; for we have it to sell." They thought them mad. The story reached the ears of Charles the Great. He sent for Clement and Melrose, and asked them whether they really had knowledge to sell, and what their price was. They answered that their price was "a place to teach it in, pupils to learn it, and needful food and raiment." Their services were readily accepted by the king, who established a schola in his palace under Clement and Alcuin, while he took Melrose with him on his Italian expedition, and finally made him superintendent of the schola at Pavia.

The "Palatine School" had already existed under Pepin, but it remained for his illustrious son to perfect and enlarge it. All serious historians, among them, Denifle, Rashdall and Laurie, reject the idea that by Charles the Great were laid the foundations of the University of Paris.

³⁶ Mullinger: *Schools of Charles the Great.*

"The myth which attributes the foundation of the University of Paris to Charles the Great is one which ought long since to have ceased to be mentioned by serious historians even for the purpose of refutation. There is not the slightest ground for localizing the Palatine Schools of Charles the Great or Charles the Bald, the School Alcuin or the School of Scotus, in the city of Lutetia Parisiorum. These schools were probably migratory and followed the person of the sovereign, like our ancient Courts of Law, in his progresses through his dominions. In so far as they had any fixed abode, we should have to look for it at Aachen rather than at Paris. The assumption of an identity between the Schools of the Palace and the later Church Schools of Paris is in truth only an outgrowth of that inveterate historical misconception, dear to the heart of the French nation, which represents the founder of the Germano-Roman Empire as a French King, with his capital and his court at Paris.

"The sole historical connection between the Palatine Schools of Charles the Great or Charles the Bald and the later University of Paris is to be found in that revival of the episcopal and monastic schools throughout the Frankish Empire. . . . Before the time of Charles the Great, the British Isles could boast of far more famous schools than any that were to be found on continental Europe. The call of Alcuin from York to the Palace School marks the transference of the Primacy of Letters from Britain to France. And some of the features which characterized the Parisian University system may really be traced to the work of Charles. In the first place, there is its intensely ecclesiastical character—the system of supervision by ecclesiastical authorities and the complete identification of the scholastical with the clerical order. Moreover the educational tradition which was inherited by the School of Paris was one ultimately derived from the schools of Alcuin and John the Scot. But this educational tradition was not transmitted by any single school. All through the dark ages that intervened between Charles the Great and the twelfth century, there were at least a few monasteries and perhaps one or two cathedrals where the face of some great teacher drew students from distant regions, and where some ray of enthusiasm, some spark of controversial fire, infused a little life into the dull conglomerate of old-world learning and

traditional theology which made up the education of this dismal period. The historians of the University of Paris have amused themselves with tracing the long scholastic pedigree of Master and Scholar—the academical succession, so to speak—which connects Alcuin with Abelard. But it is only somewhat in this imaginative sense that the smallest connection can be established between Charles and the great French University. In the age of Charles the Great or of Charles the Bald, nothing whatever is heard of the schools of Paris. Tours and Fulda and Reims were famous places of education before Paris could claim a single important Master or a single distinguished scholar.”³⁷

When Alcuin and his confrères entered upon their educational labors in Frankland, learning was at a very low ebb. But we must remember that “the grossest ignorance of the dark ages was not due to the strength of the ecclesiastical system but to its weakness. The improvement of education formed a prominent object with every zealous Churchman and every ecclesiastical reformer from the days of Gregory the Great to the days when the darkness passed away under the interest of the ecclesiastical revival of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. If the monastic system of Cassian retained something of the ascetic and obscurantist traditions of the Egyptian desert, the Benedictine monasticism which supersedes it created almost the only homes of learning and education, and constituted by far the most powerful civilizing agency in Europe, until it was superseded as an educational instrument by the growth of the universities.”³⁸

Under Charles the Great, the palace school had many an illustrious student. Alcuin lectured to an unusual gathering.

“Around him, as the years went by, he saw successively appear the three royal sons, born in rightful wedlock; Charles, the future ruler of Neustria and Austrasia; Pepin, the acknowledged lord of Italy; and Louis who almost from his cradle had worn the crown of Aquitaine—the graceful young athlete and mighty hunter, his mind already opening to that love for learning which, through all the good and evil of his checkered life, he

³⁷ Rashdall: *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

cherished so fondly in later years. Then again was Charles' much loved sister, Gisela, abbess of Chelles, who, from her girlhood renounced the world, but whom the fame of the great teacher drew from her conventual retirement. Thither also came the last, and best-loved of Charles' wives, Liutgarda, of the proud Alemannic race, hereafter to prove among the firmest of Alcuin's friends; and the royal daughter, Gisela whom parental affection held too dear for the proudest alliance. There too was Charles' son-in-law, Angilvert, chiefly distinguished as yet for his fondness for the histrionic art, but afterwards the saintly abbot of St. Riquier. There too were the royal cousins, the half-brothers, Adelhard and Wala, whose after action shook the whole fabric of the Carlovingian empire—the former brought back from Corbey to mingle in the court life which he had shunned, and to forget Desiderata's wrongs—the latter whose fair face bespoke his Saxon lineage, restored from a mysterious banishment to the royal favor. There too were Riculfus, destined ere long to fill the chair of St. Boniface and rule the great see of Mayence; Einhard, the royal biographer, the classic of the ninth century; and Fridugis, Alcuin's youthful countryman, poet and philosopher, not always faithful to his master's teachings.

"Then too there were the royal daughters, whom the foolish old father would not suffer to marry, and who, breathing the atmosphere of a luxurious palace, and taking pattern by his own sad example, might sadly but go astray—the *coronatae columbae*, as Alcuin terms them, when warning his countryman and successor, Fridugis, against their charms, and whom Louis the Pious on his accession, in his honest efforts to reform the court, sent packing to a nunnery."³⁹

These "royal daughters" are unusually interesting. They were the children of three mothers. For some years, like most of his contemporaries, Charles had indulged in polygamy. Even among his lawful wives, he never remained a widower for long. The last of his legitimate queens, Liutgarda, was worthy of her exalted position. On June 4, 800, she died at Tours, after a short married life. She left no offspring. Her deathbed was

³⁹ Mullinger: *Schools of Charles the Great*.

hallowed by the presence and ministrations of Alcuin, who calls her "his daughter, religious, and devoted to God; having an earnest desire to benefit the servants of God and the Church." "Verily, most noble lady," he exclaims, "you ever set the example of pure morality to the people, and of most holy conversation before God, causing the tongue of all to rehearse your praise, and their hearts turn to you in love."

Writing of her during her life, the bishop of Orleans says: "The beautiful lady Liutgarda displays the riches of her piety in the shining frame of a cultured mind. The nobility and the people everywhere confess that the brilliant beauty of her accomplishments is eclipsed by the more dazzling beauty of her virtues. Prodigal in her charities, benignant in disposition, and most sweet of speech, her life is a blessing to all, an injury to none."

Writing to Liutgarda, the same bishop penned the following complimentary words: "O potent queen, the glory of the great king and of the people, the light and blooming ornament of the Church. May the Father throned on high, grant long life to you, and thus bless the people and the Church of God. You are the light and splendor, the dazzling ornament of all the realm, gracing your beauty with the riches of a godly life. Companion of the pious king, you are his well-merited reward, a precious help-mate, causing his name to be lauded to the sky. Your outward beauty yields the palm to that within, but I do not venture to say which is first. For beautiful is the burden of your speech; more beautiful your acts, but you yourself are conqueror of both. May God who gave you the will to do so much good, grant you power to bring it to good effect, and bless you world without end."

Rothaid, the eldest of Charles' daughters, was the child of Himiltrud. She was about thirty years old when Liutgarda died. Rotrud, Bertha, and Gisela were children of Hildegarde. Theodrada and Hiltrud were the daughters of the ill-famed Fastrada. All were well-formed, beautiful, and educated according to the customs of the age in which they lived.

Charles' plan for his children's education was, first of all, to have both his sons and daughters instructed in the liberal arts. To these he also turned his own attention. As soon as

they were old enough, in accordance with the custom of the Franks, his sons had to learn horsemanship, and practice war and the chase. His daughters were taught cloth making as well as the use of the distaff and spindle, that they might not become indolent through idleness. He fostered in them every virtue. He never took his meals without them when he was at home. Neither did he make a journey without some of them. His sons would ride at his side, and his daughters follow him, while a number of attendants, detailed for their protection, brought up the rear.

Strange to say, though his daughters were very handsome, and he greatly loved them, Charles never allowed any of them to marry. He kept them all at home until his death, saying that he could not dispense with their society. Hence though otherwise happy, he experienced great chagrin as far as they were concerned. Yet he concealed his knowledge of the rumors current of a licentious court, and of the suspicions entertained of their honor.

Soon Alcuin became the most prominent educator in all Europe. Under his system, to men and women, prince and peasant were given the same education, that education which formed the chief glory of Anglo-Saxon England. It marked the beginning of a literary revival which, more than any mere military achievement, led to the civilization and education of Europe.

As an educator, Alcuin's great merit lay in the power he had of imparting to others his passionate love of learning. To the talented youth who flocked to him from all sides, he transmitted his own enthusiasm for study and teaching. Thus he trained for subsequent ages the teachers of Paris and Rome, Bologna and Salamanca, Cologne and Vienna. Like his predecessor, Bede, Alcuin was a teacher rather than a thinker. He gathered only that he might sow. "*Disce ut doceas*" was his motto.

In 796, when Alcuin was in the seventh decade of his life, his longing for retirement could be no longer restrained. He wished to go to Fulda, there to end his days amid the scenes hallowed by his countryman Boniface. But Charles instead gave to him the abbacy of the more venerable monastery of St. Martin at Tours. At once Alcuin made the house a center of

religious and intellectual activity. His quick eye soon detected a dearth of books. To York he sent for the books he knew and loved in his ardent youth. He supervised the labors of the *scriptorium*, and the work accomplished under his direction became models for succeeding generations.

With his intellectual tendencies Alcuin combined a tender, affectionate disposition which formed warm friendships with his pupils. Many of his letters were written to his scholars. Thirty alone were penned to his beloved disciple Arno, who afterward became archbishop of Salzburg. Before he died, Alcuin saw the fruits of his labors in the countless young men whom he had trained engaged all over Europe in the Christ-like work of teaching. "Wherever," says Wattenbach, speaking of this period, "anything of literary activity is visible, there we can with certainty count on finding a pupil of Alcuin." Among his students he could point to Arno, archbishop of Salzburg; Theodulph, bishop of Orleans; Eanbald, archbishop of York; Adelhard, the cousin of Charlemagne; Aldrich, abbot of Ferrieres; and Fridugis, the successor of Alcuin at Tours. Rabanus Marus, the celebrated leader of Fulda, was also indebted to him for much of his learning. Thus the intellectual labors inaugurated by St. Hilda and her contemporaries in England, extended down the centuries until we find the intellects that flourished in Northumbria in the sixth century moulding the minds of Europe in the ninth and tenth, and laying the foundations of the vaster learning of the middle ages.

CHAPTER X

THE ALFREDIAN RENAISSANCE

Only a decade passed after Alcuin's departure for Frankland, when rumblings were heard of the approach of an enemy. The Danes, as they were called, those warriors of the sea, had off and on paid piratical visits to the British shores. But in 793 a large force landed on the Northumbrian coast, burned down the venerable monastery of Lindisfarne, and slaughtered the monks. This was but the beginning. In the following year, Wearmouth and Jarrow met the same fate. Soon the other monasteries became victims of the Danish rapacity. In far-off Frankland, Alcuin spoke with tearful eyes of the destruction prevalent throughout his native land. Those of us who, in 1914 mourned the loss of Louvain, know how Alcuin felt when he heard the sad news of York's demolition.

By 878, when the Treaty of Wedmore was signed, the whole civilization of two centuries and a half was swept away. Pagan worship was carried on in the very districts evangelized by Paulinus, Aidan and Wilfrid. "As to England," asks Cardinal Newman, "who does not know the terrible epic, so it may be called, of the eighth and ninth centuries? How Ragnar Lodbrog, in opposition to his wife, Aslauga's counsel, built two large ships in his pride, which were useless in the hour of defeat, when swiftness of flight was as necessary to him as vigor in attack; and how these clumsy vessels were wrecked on the Northumbrian coast, and Ragnar taken prisoner; and lastly how the barbarous Ella, the prince of the district, doomed his fallen enemy to die in prison by the stings of venomous snakes? His *Quida*, or death song, as he was supposed to sing it in his dungeon, is preserved, and traces out the history of those savage exploits which were his sole comfort when he was giving up his soul to his Maker. Fifty-one times, as he recounts, had he rallied his people round his uplifted lance; and he died in the joyful thought that his sons would avenge him. He was not wrong in that belief. Alfred was a youth of nineteen in his brother's court when the news came that eight kings and twenty earls, all relations or friends of Ragnar, headed by three

of his sons, of whom the cruel Ingwar and Hubba were two, had landed on the east coast. They moved to York, gained possession of Ella, split him into the form of a spread eagle, and rubbed salt into his wounds. Next they got possession of Nottingham. Then they were back again into Lincolnshire, desolating and destroying the whole face of the country. They burned the famous abbeys at Bardeney and Croyland, and tortured and murdered the monks. Then they went to Peterborough and to Ely, where the nuns, according to the well known history, mutilated their faces to preserve their honor. Then they fought, defeated, captured, tortured, and martyred St. Edmund. Next they got possession of Reading. We mention these familiar facts, not for their own sake, but to illustrate that fearful celerity and almost caprice of locomotion, with which they rushed to and fro about the country. At Reading, they were met by Alfred, who shortly after succeeded to the throne of Wessex, and who in the first year of his royal power, fought eight pitched battles with them. Such is our introduction to the romantic history of that celebrated king."⁴⁰

"Nothing is more curious nor more interesting in history," writes Sharon Turner, "than to remark that when great political exigencies occur, which threaten to shake the foundations of civil society, they are usually as much distinguished by the rise of sublime characters, with genius and ability sufficient to check the progress of the evil, and even to convert its disasters to benevolent issues. One of these extraordinary persons was Alfred the Great, and considered with regard to the time of his appearance, the great ends which he achieved, and the difficulties under which he found himself, no historical character can more justly claim our attention and admiration than our venerated king."

The results of the Danish invasion were disastrous. The Anglo-Saxon Church presented a melancholy spectacle. The laity returned to the ferocious manners of their pagan forefathers. The clergy had grown indolent, dissolute, and illiterate. The monastic order was apparently annihilated. It de-

⁴⁰ Cardinal Newman: *Historical Sketches*.

volved on Alfred, now victorious over his enemies, to remedy all these evils.

With more than ordinary right, is Alfred of England called "the Great." History looks upon him as the revivor of learning and civilization in distracted England in the ninth century; he is the restorer of the English army, the father of the English navy, an educator, an author, and a legislator. While he did much for England's material progress, he did more for her intellectual development. It is as the reviver of learning after the Danish invasion that we shall consider him now. In a later chapter we shall give further attention to his literary productions which merit for him a prominent place in English literature.

"England's darling" knew not how to read until his twelfth year. He was the youngest son of an indulgent father, Ethelwulf, who had spent several years in a monastery as a religious. For political reasons, and with legitimate sanction, Ethelwulf abandoned the monastic life. His calm, meditative character, and intellectual tendencies may be traced in his illustrious son. Alfred's introduction to literature is so familiar to all, it hardly bears repetition here. His mother died when he was quite young. His father then determined to go to Rome, accompanied by his youngest son. On the journey, they passed through France, where Ethelwulf met and fell in love with Judith the daughter of Charles *le Chauve*. Ethelwulf continued his journey to Rome, presented Alfred to the Pope, obtained some privileges for his country, and then returned to Charles the Bald, and requested his daughter Judith in marriage. The alliance was promptly arranged. The ceremony was performed by Hincmar of Rheims. Alfred had the unusual experience of being present at the wedding of his father to a woman who was destined to influence his whole subsequent career. Her Saxon name was Leotheta. Tradition says she was only twelve when she entered England as a bride. This seems hardly probable. At least she was possessed of some learning, for she was fond of reading, and delighted in those beautiful books which were the joy of her intellectual father. Judith came from Frankland. She brought with her into England all the culture of the Frankish court. One day, so

the legend says, she was reading an illuminated copy of the Anglo-Saxon poets. It proves the refinement and versatility of her tastes that she should so soon acquire a liking for the poets of her adopted country. She showed the book to her little sons, and promised it to the first one who should learn to read it. Alfred took the book, found a master, and soon learned to read it, in order to gain the coveted prize. From that time on, Alfred's one desire was to acquire an education, and to make it possible for all his subjects to gain one. There is at least enough truth in the story to make us believe Alfred owed his introduction to learning to the encouragement of his young stepmother.

We may regard Judith as an exponent of Anglo-Saxon education of women. She came from the court whose intellectual atmosphere had been created by Alcuin. It seems more than a coincidence that the offspring of one of his pupils should by her impetus, help to rekindle learning in the land that gave Alcuin to the famous palace school of Charles the Great. It is the divine economy ruling the distribution of intellectual, as well as of material wealth. In Judith we meet another instance of "the eternal womanly" influence which seems ever to guide the affairs of men.

"This French princess," says Sharon Turner, "was the kind Minerva from whom arose the first shoots of that intellectual character which we admire in Alfred."

When he ascended the throne, Alfred wrote that "knowledge has now so escaped from the English people, that few priests south of the Humber can be found who understand the divine service, or can explain a Latin epistle in English." And according to the historian Hallam, the district south of the Thames, "was the best part of England."

This intellectual darkness among the English seems more intense when we contrast it with the brilliant culture of the Spanish Arabs at this time. "Casiri's multifarious catalogue," affirms Prescott, "bears ample testimony to the emulation with which not only men but even women of the highest rank, devoted themselves to letters; the latter contending publicly for the prizes, not merely in eloquence and poetry, but in those recondite studies which have usually been reserved for the other sex. The prefects of the provinces, emulating their master,

converted their courts into academies, and dispensed premiums to poets and philosophers. The stream of royal bounty awakened life in the remotest districts. But its effects were especially visible in the capital. Eighty free schools were opened in Cordova. The circle of letters and science was publicly expounded by professors whose reputation for wisdom attracted not only the scholars of Christian Spain, but of France, Italy, Germany, and the British Isles. For this period of brilliant illumination with the Saracens corresponds precisely with that of the deepest barbarism of Europe, when a library of three or four hundred volumes was a magnificent endowment for the richest monastery; when scarcely a priest south of the Thames, in the words of Alfred, could translate Latin into his mother tongue; when not a single philosopher, according to Thiraboschi, was to be met with in Italy, save only the French Pope, Sylvester the Second, who drew his knowledge from the schools of the Spanish Arabs, and was esteemed a necromancer for his pains."

Yet in Mercia, Alfred found Saxon scholars who helped him in his herculean task of bringing about a renaissance of learning in his realm. They were Werefrith, bishop of Worcester, Plegmund, Athelstan and Werwulf. Plegmund in 890 became archbishop of Canterbury. Werefrith, "most erudite in the divine Scriptures," knew Latin well enough to translate *The Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great. Athelstan and Werwulf became the royal chaplains. Part of their duty was to read to Alfred, "both by day and by night," those books which he could not read for himself. Denewulf, a swineherd from Wessex, so captivated the king that he had him educated, and he afterward became bishop of Winchester.

Grimbald was brought from Rheims in 884. At a Synod held in London at this time, Alfred addressed the English nobility and clergy. He exhorted all to a devout life, and pleaded for energetic endeavors to restore what Danish barbarism had destroyed. A monk of Corbey, named John of old Saxony, brought over a small community of French monks, whom Alfred placed in a new monastery on the Isle of Athelney. But, more than all the rest, did the British Asser, of St. David's monastery, help Alfred in his labors. After many pleadings, As-

ser finally consented to spend six months of each year at Alfred's court. The court school was placed in his hands and modeled after that of Charles the Great. In it noble and lowly learned the liberal arts, Asser says, and read both Latin and Saxon books.

Edward, Alfred's eldest son, made rapid progress in his studies. Ethelfleda, his daughter, continued her education much longer than was usual for her sex. She married a prince of Mercia, and was famed all over England for her superior intellect, her accomplishments, and her high moral character. She was worthy of her noble father, and fully repaid the care he took in her education.

Alfred sent his youngest son Ethelward to the schools he founded for the public. And the young prince gained renown for his talent and industry. So anxious was Alfred to make education free, that he enacted a law stipulating that every free man who possessed two hides of land should keep his sons at school until they were fifteen, "because a man born free, who is unlettered, is to be regarded no otherwise than as a beast, having, like them, no understanding." Men who had no children of their own were urged to provide for the education of unfortunate little ones, that thus might be trained worthy officers of the Church and state, creditable members of society. "I marvel," he exclaimed, when remonstrating with his judiciary department, "that you who have been intrusted with the office of the Wise (Witan), should have neglected the studies of the wise. Therefore, either resign your offices, or apply yourselves to gain wisdom."

These drastic terms caused many a man in middle life to place himself under tuition. Those too old to learn had their sons and freed men educated, that they might learn from oral reading what they were unable to acquire by themselves. Alfred did more than enact laws for education. He tried to re-establish some of the monastic schools destroyed by the Danish invaders. But the religious spirit was quite extinct among the English people at this time. The historian Asser assures us that the monastic state was held in such disrepute that no freeman in Wessex was willing to embrace it.

The example of the secular clergy helped to increase popular sensuality. Few priests were willing to lead a celibate life. Divorce was not uncommon among the people. We hear Boniface in Germany saying that he blushed to find England alone disfigured by the brutal habit of drunkenness to which the very pagans were strangers.

The monastery at Athelney and that at Winchester only owe their restoration to Alfred. "It must be admitted that Alfred's efforts to restore monasticism in England were a failure, and in this respect his restoration of learning differed from that of Charlemagne. The Frankish monarch found himself surrounded by institutions which needed only encouragement to become the fit instruments of his work. The monastic spirit was vigorous in France in the eighth century, and he had but to speak the word to see schools and libraries starting up in connection with the cathedrals and monasteries. But in England the case was far different, and hence the real good achieved by Alfred was effected less by the schools that he founded than by the books that he wrote."⁴¹

Alfred crowded the heroic achievements of his life in the short space of fifty-one years. The date of his death is disputed. Some claim 900, others 901. When nineteen years old he was raised by his brother to subordinate rank of royal dignity. He married Ealswitha, the daughter of a Mercian nobleman. The earnestness with which Alfred in his Boëthius speaks of conjugal affection implies that this union contributed greatly to his happiness.⁴²

Speaking of Alfred, a learned historian writes: "If ever there was a king who attained to wide sovereignty by the force of events, and without any violent acts of his own, his was that unusual blessing; and he had another still more unusual, that of being supremely happy in his immediate descendants. Charlemagne, a century before, had done his own work on a larger scale; but it came to naught for want of those who could carry it on. But Edward and Ethelfleda, the children of Alfred, and Athelstan his grandson, were, in their place and day, as great

⁴¹ Drane. *Christian Schools and Scholars.*

⁴² Sharon Turner: *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Vol. I.

as he had been in his. Alfred had been the first king of the English, and Athelstan was the first king of England. He brought under the Danes, and extended his sovereignty to the furthest point of the north, and became nominal lord even of Wales and Scotland. Thus *suaviter et fortiter*, with the vigor yet the deliberateness of some natural growth, was the English monarchy brought into existence."⁴³

In the midst of the gloom of the tenth century, the darkest years of the so-called "dark ages," a name arises in England, which today represents one of the greatest lights of learning the Anglo-Saxon Church possessed. The name of St. Dunstan is a household word to every English boy and girl. He is today the universally recognized patron of all students throughout the United Kingdom, as he was in medieval times the patron of more than one craft gild. St. Dunstan was born on the estate of his father, Heorstan, near Glastonbury. The year of his birth is disputed. It certainly was between 924 and 925. According to legend his advent was heralded by one of those miraculous forewarnings with which early hagiography abounds. His mother, Cynethryth, was an exceptionally holy woman. While in the church of S. Mary on Candlemas day, it is said all the lights were suddenly extinguished. At once the candle Cynethryth held was re-lighted, and all present in the church lit their candles from hers. This was regarded as an omen that her child "would be the minister of eternal light to the Church in England."

The lamp of learning was burning low. Scholars were few and far between. A solitary group of Irish educators then frequented Glastonbury. To them Dunstan's father entrusted the training of his son. These teachers did their work so well, that their young pupil soon imbibed their own passionate love for learning. The education of St. Dunstan is only one of the many debts England owes to Celtic scholarship.

He received the tonsure with his parents' consent, took minor orders, and served in the ancient church of St. Mary. At once he became renowned for his learning and skill in artistic craft. He won favor at court, and ere long he was the envy of all. His

⁴³ Cardinal Newman: *Historical Sketches*, Vol. III.

intelligence caused him to be accused of magic, so that his superstitious royal patron dismissed him from the service of the palace.

Having made his religious profession in the hands of his near relative, Bishop Aelfheah, the Bald, St. Dunstan built a little cell nigh to St. Mary's, and entered upon a cenobitical life. In this crude abode, five feet long, and two and a half feet deep, he lived a hermit's life, studying, praying, and working at his various trades, with no relaxation save his beloved harp. An eleventh-century legend tells us it was here he was tempted by the devil. The saint conquered his adversary only by seizing with his tongs the face of the enemy of mankind. While the story is probably only a legend, it is deeply symbolic.

At this juncture St. Dunstan became the friend and counsellor of Lady Aethelflaed. She was King Athelstan's niece. At her death, her vast wealth passed into the hands of Dunstan. This enabled him to revive learning and the monastic life in England. The death of his father gave him new possessions also. In 940, King Athelstan died, and was succeeded by Edmund. Edmund recognized through a supernatural rescue from death, the talent and capability of Dunstan. He enthroned him abbot of Glastonbury, commissioned him to restore divine worship and regular observance in the ancient abbey, and promised him loyal support.

The task before St. Dunstan was no easy one. He had to re-create monastic life. The Benedictine Rule in all its vigor was re-established at Glastonbury. The cathedral was rebuilt and a school soon erected, which became the most famous in the country.

In his noble work, St. Dunstan was not alone. He found generous, willing disciples in Odo, Oswald, and Ethelwold. Odo was of Danish, heathen parents who soon disowned him because of his interest in things Christian. One of King Alfred's thanes, in pity, had him educated at the court school, where he soon acquired proficiency in Greek and Latin. He became a priest, and in 942 was promoted to the see of Sherbourne by King Athelstan.

The destruction of the monastic schools by the Danes was the principal cause of the decline of ecclesiastical discip-

line in England at this time. A new clergy was needed who should be trained in piety and learning from their youth up. Seminaries could be established only in the abbeys that were being resuscitated under the inspiration of Dunstan. At Glastonbury he founded the first monastic school since the Danish invasion. Within its walls were educated England's most famous ecclesiastics during the tenth century. In his system of education, Dunstan advocated the reading of the old Latin poets, because as he rightly thought, it trained the mind and improved literary style. He was sufficiently shrewd and patriotic enough to encourage the study of Anglo-Saxon literature, for thus his clergy could become fluent in the vernacular and reach more readily the hearts of their people. Arithmetic, geometry, science, and astronomy were included in the curriculum, while music was given prominence. It was a course of study which might arouse the envy of the humanists six centuries later.

In a comparatively short time the holiness and talent of Dunstan affected the permanent reform in learning and morals which Alfred the Great had tried in vain to bring about. So low had fallen the monastic calling, that none but churls were willing to wear the cowl. At St. Dunstan's example public opinion changed, and from Glastonbury went forth other foundations whose superiors were chosen from among St. Dunstan's own monks. Among these Ethelwold was not the least distinguished. To prevent his going to Fleury to perfect himself in sacred science and discipline, the king offered him the ruined abbey of Abbingdon. At once he began to restore its monastic discipline. To Corbey he sent for monks, and to the same institution he despatched some of his own disciples to learn in that celebrated seminary the customs and methods of monastic life.

Ethelwold was a teacher as well as a student. He was proficient in grammar, poetry, and the mechanical arts, and spent several years in imparting his knowledge to others. Like his master St. Dunstan, he was an enthusiastic lover of science. His renown as a musician and mathematician was not small. One of his mathematical treatises which he addressed to the celebrated Gerbert, is jealously preserved in the Bodleian Library. He loved the work of teaching for its own sake, and by engag-

ing the affections of his numerous pupils he recruited the ranks of the clergy. "It was ever sweet to him," says his biographer Wolstan, "to teach youths and little ones, to explain their Latin to them in English, to instruct them in the rules of grammar and prosody, and allure them by cheerful words to study and improvement. And so it came to pass that many of his disciples became priests and abbots, some also bishops and archbishops, in the realm of England."

It is at this period we find the Anglo-Saxon language taking its place in the literature of the people. Ethelwold rendered the Rule of St. Benedict into the vernacular, for the use of his monks. A copy of it may be seen in the Cottonian Library. The Latin text has an interlinear Anglo-Saxon version. One of Ethelwold's pupils, named Alfric, seems to have specialized in English literature. He translated several books of the Bible into the vernacular, compiled a Latin and English grammar, and several other text books. In the preface of his grammar he states that he aimed at the promotion of sacred studies, especially among the young, for, he says, "it is the duty of ecclesiastics to guard against such a want of learning in our day as was to be found in England but a very few years ago, when not a priest could be found to translate a Latin epistle, till Archbishop Dunstan and Bishop Ethelwold encouraged learning in their monasteries."

At Ethelwold's request, the king granted him all the minsters that had been ruined by the heathen Danes. His numerous restorations gained for him the well-earned title "father of monks."

All this while, St. Oswald was laboring in the northern provinces. He restored the abbeys of Pershore, Winchcombe, and St. Albans. He founded Ramsay, which afterward became one of England's most famous seats of learning.

"The English restoration of letters, inaugurated by St. Dunstan and his companions, which resulted in the establishment of schools of this character, took place at a critical period, when fresh tides of barbarism were overwhelming the continental territories, and reducing the monastic institute in France to its very lowest ebb. This tenth century was, in fact, the famous 'age of iron,' which in spite of its celebrity as the very mid-

night of the dark ages, fills strange to say, a very important place in the history of monastic literature."⁴⁴

"The communities of religious women had not suffered less," says the learned Dr. Lingard, "than those of the men from the ravages of the barbarians; but they were restored with greater success under the patronage of Alfred and his queen Alswithe."

The nunnery at Shaftesbury owes its origin to Alfred, while that of Winchester claims Alswithe as its royal foundress. Their inmates were mostly of Anglo-Saxon birth too. The noble lineage of the abbesses attracted worthy postulants, and soon the rising generation of women found in these newly established convents the learning and spirituality for which they had craved so long after the Danish invasion.

Shaftesbury had for its first abbess Ethelgeove, Alfred's daughter. On the death of her father, her mother Ealswitha joined the community at Winchester, where her declining years were brightened by her little grand-daughter Eadburga. She was King Edward's child, and at the early age of three was placed under the custody of the nuns of St. Mary's at Winchester.

After their restoration under Alfred and Dunstan, the convents for women steadily increased. The conduct of the nuns was truly edifying. But the royalty and wealth among them engendered a pomp little in accord with the spirit of "My Lady Poverty." The story is told that St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, met at court the abbess Edith, daughter of King Edgar. Her elegant dress shocked the austere bishop. "Daughter," he remonstrated, "the Spouse whom you have chosen delights not in external pomp. It is the heart which He demands." "True, father," she curtly replied, "and my heart I have given to Him. While He possesses it, He will not be offended by external pomp."

The Anglo-Saxon period of English history ends with the reign of Edward the Confessor. His wife was Edith, daughter of Godwin. "She was skilled in letters," says the Saxon monk Ingulphus, "holy, meek, and modest; she had nothing of the rudeness of her father's race; and it came to be said as a pro-

⁴⁴ Drane: *Christian Schools and Scholars*.

verb that Editha, born from the stem of Godwin, was like a fair rose blossoming on a thorny stock." He tells us she was an "erudite scholar," versed perfectly in "the quirps of logic and the subtle snares of argumentation," while at the same time he celebrates her skill as an embroideress, and assures us that her needle rivalled the colors of the limner.

Cardinal Newman calls St. Edward "the morning star of a heavy day, saintly and beautiful himself, but the forerunner of the foreigners in his acts, and the harbinger of woe in his last words. . . . With the Danes lay the prospects of good or evil for that England of which they had so long been the scourge and the ruin. They were a young, energetic, enterprising, ambitious people. They could fight, they could trade; but they had to learn the lessons of the Gospel and the arts of life. Could England be their teacher after the massacre of St. Brice? If a Christian nation slaughtered its unsuspecting converts, who would be converted by it henceforth? The poor Anglo-Saxons had only strength for a treacherous and impotent revenge; they had fallen from that state of ethical and social advancement, which the Danes had not yet attained.

"Neither island then could either expel the Northmen nor civilize them. Men of their own race, already converted and civilized, were equal to the enterprise, and these the Pope sent first to England, then to Ireland, to undertake it."⁴⁵

The transition was inaugurated with the Norman Conquest when there entered England new customs, a new language, and a new form of government. It took many years for the English to assimilate the Norman system, but the unity of Faith was kept intact.

If, with his feudal system William the Conqueror is the founder of the English nobility, he also became the re-founder of many of the ancient seats of learning. Under his auspices Aldwin, a monk of Winchecombe, was lead to re-establish Jarrow, Wearmouth, and Whitby. Fired with zeal by reading the account of monastic and intellectual life during the Anglo-Saxon era, Aldwin set his huts on the ancient ruins of Northumbria. Those who came to scoff at his enterprise, remained to pray, and

⁴⁵ Cardinal Newman: *Historical Sketches*, Vol. III.

ere long northern England saw rise from their ashes, the walls once built by Bede and Hilda.

Then began a re-birth of learning in the land of Saxon and Norman. The seed planted by Columba and Aidan, Augustine and Adrian brought forth fruit a hundred-fold. This was another spring for faith and learning. The harvest was reached in the glorious middle ages, when Oxford and Cambridge took their place beside Bologna and Paris. England's king was "the Defender of the Faith," and England's children were the brightest jewels in the crown of their mother, the Church. In learning, secular as well as profane, the men and women of England down to the very eve of the Protestant revolution, could not be excelled in all Europe. Thomas More bears an unrivalled name in the world of letters. And Margaret Roper is by no means inferior to Vittoria Colonna.

But a long, dreary winter for the intellectual life set in for England when her eighth Henry took unto himself his second wife. Then followed the break with Rome. Students of history need not be reminded what that meant.

We have seen that the Anglo-Saxons wrote large and well in the book of the deeds. At the dawn of the seventh century, when barely a hundred years had passed since their conversion to Christianity, we find them at the pinnacle of European culture. In the book of the arts they have left us imperishable pages. Mention has already been made of their skill in printing and of the exquisite illumination work with which they enriched their manuscripts, and which gave their volumes a beauty unrivaled even to this day. Many skilled jewelers were in the land. Specimens of their handicraft are still in existence. The most conspicuous and interesting of these is the Alfred Jewel, now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, where it has been since 1718. It was discovered in Newton Park, near Athelney in 1693. It is an immense enameled figure encased in a golden frame, with a golden back. A thick piece of rock crystal in front serves as a glass to preserve the picture. It is shaped like the longitudinal section of a pigeon's egg. The smaller end is elongated and fashioned like the head of a boar. The snout forms a socket as though it were meant to fit in a peg. The cross pin to fit this socket in the peg is still in place. Around the

rim are the words: "Aelfred mec heht gewyrccean." (Alfred me commanded to make.) Many critics think this famous jewel was a personal ornament of the great Alfred. The signification of the jewel and how it was worn is a matter of conjecture. Sir Francis Palgrave considered the figure older than its setting. It may have been a gift from a pope or continental sovereign. Perhaps it was so mounted to fit on a helmet, or to ornament the imperial crown.

The style of Anglo-Saxon architecture is best exhibited in their churches. The Celtic missionaries first built with oaken planks covered with reeds or straw. The Romans built with unwrought stone. We know that Pope Gregory the Great allowed St. Augustine to retain the pagan temples for Christian worship. Then followed churches of massive structure and artistic form, resembling those on the continent. Their style was along the Byzantine lines, symbolic of the sturdy faith of the builders. We have seen what Aldhelm, Wilfrid, Benedict Biscop, Alfred, Dunstan, and Alcuin did for architecture. Hexham cathedral was pronounced by Eddius the finest ecclesiastical structure north of the Alps.

The ornamentation of the stone crosses erected during this period is remarkable for gracefulness of design. Those at Newcastle and Ruthwell are conspicuous for their solidity and beauty of style. In the Kensington Museum is a remarkable collection of such crosses and stone work. Bristol cathedral can boast of a specimen of Anglo-Saxon sculpture representing the Saviour rescuing a soul from the devil. In the Saxon chapel at Bradford-on-Avon there are two life-sized angels, carved in relief on stone. As they are high up in the wall above the chancel arch, and as they are facing each other, they were probably on both sides of the holy rood, so common in English churches.

CHAPTER XI

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

Saxon graves have revealed many interesting specimens of weapons, glass, pottery, and personal ornaments. "Perhaps it would not be too much to say," affirms John Earle, of Oxford, "that affinity with the tumular deposits is one of the notes of the primary poetry."

This "primary poetry" was undoubtedly familiar to Anglo-Saxon women, and with the classic Greek and Latin, formed part of the education of every cultured person in England during the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth century. Indeed, even down to the days of the Conquest, Old English literature was regarded with love and reverence. It dated beyond the days of Arthur and his knights of the round table. The Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, who took possession of the Island in the early part of the fifth century, were a sea-faring people. Their poetry reflected their character and occupation. It found a ready reception among the natives, and soon took root in the heart of all the people. Hence the tone of the poetry of this period savors of Scandinavian origin, with frequent reference to their gods and myths. It may be classified as national and religious.

The poets were the minstrels, who on their harps gave vent to their emotions around the festal board. Their wooden houses were not very imposing. "At intervals the harper plays his harp. He is also a poet. He sings the soothing lay, the song serene. He recounts the tales of old. He tells of battles fought, and victories won."⁴⁶

The gleeman and his harp had travelled far and wide. Such was Widsith, who recorded his experiences in *The Scop* or *Gleeman's Tale*. *The Lament of Deor* relates the disappointment of a gleeman of the Heodenings who lost his retainership. His cheerful song reveals an independent character, that unhesitatingly says disagreeable things. This poem deserves notice since it is the only one of strophic mould which remains

⁴⁶ Br. Azarias: *Development of Old English Thought*.

to us of Old English literature. In it allusions are made to mythical personages, such as Weland, or to historical characters like Maethhilde.

"Of the origins of Old English poetry we know nothing; what remains to us is chiefly the reflections of earlier days. The fragments that we possess are not those of a literature in the making, but of a school which had passed through its age of transition from ruder elements. The days of apprenticeship were over; the Englishman of the days of Beowulf and Widsith, *The Ruin* and *The Seafarer*, knew what he wished to say and said it, without exhibiting any apparent trace of groping after things dimly seen or apprehended."⁴⁷

Among the lyric fragments sung by the poets was *The Fight at Finnesburgh*. It was a special favorite among the Anglo-Saxons, and no gathering was complete that ended without this song. But the noblest specimen of Old English poetry is *Beowulf*. It consists of 3183 lines which have been preserved practically complete in a tenth century manuscript now in the British Museum. The groundwork of this epic dates from pre-Saxon days. It is undoubtedly of pagan origin, being one of the sagas of seafaring people. By tradition it was handed down from generation to generation, receiving as time went on, changes and interpolations. Its present form is from a Christian annotator, for only a Christian could make such references to the Old and New Testaments, to Catholic characters and belief. It tells the story of the hero Beowulf, his struggle with the monster Grendel, and with that monster's mother, and finally with the great dragon. "It is not without significance," writes Ten Brink, "that a poem stands at the head of English literature whose subject is the struggle with the waves, and which is permeated with a vivid perception of the sea and of sea life."

With the introduction of Christianity among the English, we naturally find a change in the tone and character of their literary productions.

"The man who gave the first impulse to the transformation of Anglo-Saxon literature was Pope Gregory the Great. . . .

⁴⁷ *Cambridge History of English Literature.*

Contemporaneous with this revolution appeared another development of which the Anglo-Saxons could have had no idea, the introduction of learning. For the first time a classical and hieratic language was brought to their knowledge, a tongue no longer the living speech of any people, but acquaintance with which, and in some measure with its literary monuments, was henceforth to distinguish the man of culture from the mere warrior and the boor. For the first time an erudite caste was established among them, men of the book, deeply demarcated from the rest of the community by customs and rule of life. The monastery was to bring the school in its train, and ere long prose literature was to arise among a people who had hitherto known no literature but the poetical. King Ethelbert's instinct had not wholly mislead him when he shunned to meet the first missionaries from dread of their incantations, though the spirits they were actually to raise came in another shape than any he could have foreseen. At the time of Augustine's mission, the Saxons appear to have had no written character other than runes, understood by so few that they were regarded as magical, and proscribed as such by the missionaries.⁴⁸

When Augustine landed in England, he had with him a library of nine volumes, comprising the Bible in two volumes, the Psalter, the Gospels, another Psalter, another copy of the Gospels, the apocryphal lives of the Apostles, the Lives of the Martyrs, and an exposition of the Gospels and Epistles, "*Hæc sunt primitiæ librorum totius Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*," says the *Canterbury Book*.

"In the monasteries that covered England and formed such a nucleus of general culture for the surrounding districts, the study of theology was flourishing, and with it the study of those sciences of which the church had preserved a remnant from the ruins of the Roman empire, and which she transmitted to posterity. When classic learning had almost died out in the other countries of western Europe, or was no longer productive, as in Italy, Angles and Saxons increased with strenuous industry the knowledge gained in Rome or brought to them by learned foreigners and with happy talent converted it to their own

⁴⁸ Garnett and Gosse: *Illustrated History of English Literature*.

creations, so that they became the teachers of their teachers. At a time when the Italian clergy no longer knew the rules of classic versification, English monks and bishops wrote, and English nuns read, Latin verses, beside which the verses that might then have appeared elsewhere seemed almost as barbaric as they themselves appeared beside the lines of a Virgil or a Horace. Manuscripts of the works of classic authors that men began to neglect in other countries, because they did not understand them, were bought up and collected by English pilgrims to Rome, and stored in the libraries of Kent, Wessex, and Northumbria."⁴⁰

English literature owes much to St. Hilda, the strenuous abbess of Whitby, for it was she who fostered the latent talent of Caedmon. Well has he been styled "the Northumbrian Milton." Not only was the fall of man his theme, but the whole of Holy Scripture. When Caedmon was nigh to middle life, he was yet a Yorkshire cowherd. Poor, ignorant and timid, he used to retire to solitude whenever the harp appeared at the social gatherings of the neighborhood. One evening, when he thus sought comfort in his shed among the cattle, he fell asleep. A voice called him by name and said "Sing me something." "I can not sing," was the reply. "That is why I left the supper." "Sing, notwithstanding," "What shall I sing?" "Sing the beginning of the world, the creation." At once he began to sing the sacred story. Upon awakening, he remembered the words and repeated all to his neighbors.

St. Hilda was told of the strange happening. She sent for the new poet, and questioned him in the presence of numerous learned men whose opinion she valued. Through her favor "the clumsy cowherd from whose lips flowed the first great English song" found sympathy and encouragement. With a woman's intuition, she detected more than ordinary genius in this humble bard. She took him as a gift from God. Every opportunity was offered him to cultivate his talent. She had him taught the Scriptures. Bede tells us that Caedmon *ruminated* the Holy Writings and translated them into songs so beautiful that all who listened were delighted. Of Genesis he sang, and of Exo-

⁴⁰ Ten Brink: *Early English Literature*.

dus, and of Daniel. Caedmon not merely paraphrased these great events, but he cast them in poems of a high literary value. His characters are sharply delineated, his pictures are all aglow with real, dramatic life.

The songs of Caedmon could not have been unknown to Milton. "The Satan of Milton," says Taine, "exists in that of Caedmon as a picture exists in a sketch, for both derive their picture from the race. Caedmon has found his materials in the warriors of the North, as Milton in the Puritans."

When we think how strong an influence the Bible has had on the literature of our language, it is deeply significant that this first English poem is based on Holy Scripture. The Bible has been the making of the English language, and Caedmon had much to do with that formation.

His gentle, diffident spirit often manifested itself in his minstrelsy. "In regard of his origin and idiosyncrasy, Caedmon is rather a prototype of a modern people-poet like Burns; the one summoned from the oxstall, the other from the plow, to tell of the things of the spirit; both humble in birth and occupation and with distinct folktraits and sympathies. The Whitby poet sings in strong, sweet speech of the Israelitish quest of the Promised Land, or of such stirring happenings as those which center round Judith as protagonist. And throughout his Bible inspired epics it is curious to see the moody earnestness of the Saxon merged in the solemn, mystic-dreamy, or jubilant joy of the neophyte, this blend of character and influence coloring the touches of nature as it does other phases of the work. His verses are paraphrases in the broadest, freest sense. When so the singer wills, he expands, interpolates, introduces so much of local color that the composition comes to have independent and creative worth."⁵⁰

Caedmon's poem was discovered by Archbishop Ussher and published for the first time in 1665. It is now preserved in the Bodleian Library. Students of philology have closely scrutinized the Caedmonian manuscripts. In 1655, Francis Junius seems to have given them to the public. He was a friend of Milton, and librarian to the duke of Arundel. This cele-

⁵⁰ Richard Burton: *Literary Likings*.

brated work consists of poems on Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel, with a group of poems in a different hand. These are now called *Christ and Satan*. They include the story of the Fall of the Angels, the Descent into Hell, the Resurrection, Ascension, Last Judgment and Temptation of Our Lord. Many philologists, and among them is Grein, refuse to credit Caedmon with most of these poems, except a part of Genesis A, and sections of *Christ and Satan*.

Professor Sievers, in 1875, advanced the theory that *Genesis B*, ll 235-370 and ll 421-851, an interpolation, was only a translation of a lost old Saxon poem, of the ninth century, on Genesis. The extant New Testament section of this poem is known as "Heliand." Old Saxon is merely a dialect of the Old Low German, continental Saxon. This brilliant discovery of Professor Sievers was an important episode in modern philology. In 1894 it was substantiated by fragments of an ancient Saxon *Genesis*, which were found in the Vatican Library, and were probably written in the closing years of the ninth century. If this be true, it shows the early intercommunication of things of the mind as well as of things of the spirit, between the two nations of England and Germany.

"Whoever be their several writers," says Stopford A. Brooke, "they owe their impulse to the man who on that night took care of the cattle in the monastery of Hild. Honor from all the English race, from all the poets, greatest of the English race, is due to his name. He was the first (and I borrow some of Ebert's phrases) who, like a Scop, singing heroic tales, of the Old Testament and the subject matters of Christianity, sang to the people in their own tongue. He showed how this new material might be assimilated by the genius of the people. He made the bridge which led to the artistic poetry which begins, after him, to handle the same subjects. The old singers of heathendom, crossing it, became the new singers of Christianity."

Venerable Bede tells us that others after Caedmon strove to compose religious poems, but none could compete with him, for he learned the art of poetry not from men, but from God. "By his poetry he endeavored to turn away all men from the love of vice and to excite in them the love of and application to

good actions; for he was a very religious man, humbly submissive to regular discipline, but full of zeal against those who behaved otherwise."

When his last illness came upon him, Caedmon had himself carried to the infirmary. At once he asked for the Holy Eucharist. Recommending mutual charity to his brethren, and expressing his great love for all, with a heart glowing with divine love he received Holy Viaticum. "So that tongue," continues Bede, "which had composed so many holy words in praise of the Creator, uttered its last words while he was in the act of signing himself with the cross, and recommending himself into His hands."

In the reign of King John, Caedmon's body was discovered. It aroused reverence no less than those of the saints by which it was surrounded. "Caedmon's memory remained in great veneration not only at Streanshalh, but also through the whole kingdom of Northumberland, where his name was long honorably used as an appellation or proper name, and after the Conquest was adopted as a surname; so that there yet remain to these our days, some families in Whitby and its neighborhood that are known by the name of Cedmon or Sedman, a name with us the most honorable and ancient of all others."⁵¹

Aldhelm was the first Englishman who successfully cultivated classical learning, and he is the first of whom any literary remains are extant. Men from all parts of Europe wrote to him for information. In a letter addressed to Ealdfrith, king of Northumbria, the saint incorporates a work of importance on the laws of prosody. To illustrate his rules, he lays down a large number of metrical Latin riddles. His writings are interesting, since they throw light on the religious thought in England at his time. They also reveal the educational advantages enjoyed by women during his day.

Besides his *Praise of Virginity*, St. Aldhelm also wrote one hundred poetical enigmas "after the precedent of Symposius, but with wider scope, a greater absorption in his subject, and sometimes having the dignity of an impassioned style. They may be compared in many respects to the enigmas of Schiller,

⁵¹ Lionel Charlton: *History of Whitby*. Vol. I.

and also to some of the German poet's distichs. . . . He was fond of alliteration, that ornament of the national poetry, and massed it at times very effectively. He showed likewise a predilection for rather metrical diversions, especially the acrostic and telestitch. In the choice of the material, not less than in the manner of treating it, in his thoughtful observation of nature and human feeling, in his chaste aversion to what was gross or common, in his leaning to amplification and poetical digression, he proves an intimate relationship with that side of the Old English national character and of the Old English poesy, which was to be especially developed by Christianity: tenderness of spirit imbued with elegiac feeling. Aldhelm is said to have been an excellent musician and singer, and one of the finest poets in the vernacular who knew how to condescend to the people, and to transport them. Some poems, ascribed to him by the tradition of schools, were sung as late as the twelfth century. We can understand how he came to imitate, in his Latin poems, certain peculiarities of the national versification, which, however, are oftentimes superfluous and disturbing elements. It is likewise conceivable that such a nature often bore itself with poor grace in the majestic garb of Latin prose."⁵²

Unmindful of his episcopal dignity as bishop of Sherbourne, St. Aldhelm used to stand on a bridge and sing hymns to allure his people to divine service. So sweetly were these rendered that down to the time of Alfred the memory of them lingered among the people. The nature of these hymns we may conjecture by the specimens that have come down to us from the schools of Theodore and Adrian. Jacob Grimm attributes one of them, *Andreas*, to Aldhelm himself. It deals with a legend of St. Matthew and St. Andrew, cast in Norseman mould and abounding in Saxon thought. Christianity is portrayed, but clad in pagan garb. Only a new name is given in many instances to an old conception. But "the diction is pure, the descriptions are labored; the poet evidently looks to his style. He even calls our attention to it; or rather, he calls the attention of the two whose good pleasure he especially consulted in writing the poem: 'Yet shall ye two, in little bits, further recite

⁵² Ten Brink: *Early English Literature*.

a portion of my sayings.' The two here referred to are, in the opinion of Jacob Grimm, Ini, king of Wessex, and his queen Ethelburga, of whom Aldhelm was the friend and counselor."⁵³

We may safely call Cynewulf the greatest of our pre-Conquest poets. He was probably a Northumbrian, and wrote toward the end of the eighth century. *Elene* is undoubtedly his masterpiece. It tells the story of the finding of the holy cross by St. Helena. A story it was of special appeal to the English who looked upon the mother of Constantine as a Briton. The fourteen cantos or "fitts" are "written in a simple, dramatic style, interspersed with imaginative, and descriptive passages of great beauty. The glamour and pomp of war, the gleam of jewels, the joy of ships dancing on the waves, give life and color to a narrative permeated by the deep and serious purpose of the author. The fifteenth fitt, superfluous from the point of view of the story, is valuable as documentary evidence bearing on the poet's personality. It contains not only his signature in runes, but is a 'fragment of a great confession,' unveiling to us the manner of the man to whom the cross became salvation.

" 'I am old,' he says, 'and ready to depart, having woven word-craft and pondered deeply in the darkness of the world. Once I was gay in the hall and received gifts, gold and treasures. Yet was I buffeted with care, fettered by sins, beset with sorrows, until the Lord of all might and power bestowed on me grace and revealed to me the mystery of the holy cross. Now know I that the joys of life are fleeting, and that the Judge of all the world is at hand to deal to every man his doom.' "

It is not surprising to find this writer giving us *The Dream of the Rood*. It is "the choicest blossom of Old English Christian poetry; religious feeling has never been more exquisitely clothed than in these one hundred and forty lines of alliterative verse." It comes to us in a West-Saxon form in the *Vercelli Book*. Portions of it are carved in the runes on the Ruthwell cross in Dumfriesshire.

To the same author we owe the life of the Mercian Saint Guthlac and the story of the martyrdom of St. Juliana. Cynewulf's *Christ* is the first poem in a codex known as the *Exeter*

⁵³ Br. Azarias: *Development of Old English Thought*.

Book, a manuscript now preserved in the Exeter cathedral library. It deals with the birth, ascension, and last coming of Christ. "From a literary point of view, *Christ* is perhaps the most interesting of Cynewulf's poems. It illustrates fully the influence of Latin Christianity upon English thought."⁵⁴ The Gospels, the Roman Breviary, with the sermons and homilies of Gregory the Great furnished the original mind of this gifted author with matter for the passionate outpourings of his religious soul.

A more powerful, though less agreeable poem is that of *Judith*. Of this epic we have left, unfortunately, only a fragment of some three hundred and fifty lines. It has been attributed to Caedmon, but competent critics now place its origin at a later date. Gregory Foster thinks it was composed to commemorate the heroic deeds of Ethelfleda, the Lady of Mercia, who saved five borroughs from the conquest of the Danes. If this be true, it was probably written about 918.

"As poetry, this fragment stands in the front rank of Old English literature with *Beowulf* and *Elene* and *Andreas*. In wealth of synonyms, it is equal to the best poems of Cynewulf, while the construction of the sentences is simpler, and the narrative, in consequence, less obscure. An impression of intensity is produced by the heaping of synonyms in moments of stress, and in the prayer of Judith, and in the fierce lines which describe the onset against the Assyrians, while a sense of dramatic fitness is shown in the transitions, the divisions of the cantos, and the preparation for each great adventure. The tragedy is alive, and the actors play their parts before our eyes,"⁵⁵

A fragment remains of a poem called *The Lover's Message*. It is unique in the history of Old English literature as being the only story of man's love for woman. And it is remarkable, too, for its absence of passion and chivalry. Strange to say, it expresses no sentiment, no impulse of self-sacrifice on the part of him who expects the object of his affection to abandon herself to the dangers of the sea for his sake. It is found on page 473 of the *Exeter Book*, and its runic character places it at an early

⁵⁴ *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

date. The absence of emotion is strikingly Saxonian, though its lack of effusiveness probably indicates depth of feeling.

English speaking people may be justly proud of him whom we glory in calling "Venerable" Bede. By the solidity of his education, his knowledge of theology, his familiarity with the Bible and the Fathers of the Church, he is the bond uniting patristic with medieval theology. The long and varied number of his books gave him a continental reputation years before his death. By the form as well as by the matter of his literary productions, he has made an indelible mark on our language. The authors quoted by him show how well Benedict Biscop had provided for the library at Jarrow during his five visits to the continent. Besides the Latin Fathers, Bede mentions more than once Virgil, Horace, Terrence, Ovid, Lucan, Lucretius, Prudentius, Juvenius, Macer, Varro, Cornelius, Serverus, Fortunatus, Sedulius, and Pacuvius. Homer at that time was not translated into Latin. Therefore Bede's frequent reference to him makes us believe that he was familiar with him in the original Greek.

The labors of Bede were largely in the field of theology. But besides that, he has given us some poetry, and treatises on natural science, grammar, and history. "Bede's works," says Turner, "are evidence that the establishment of the Teutonic nations on the ruins of the Roman Empire did not barbarize knowledge. He collected and taught more natural truths than any Roman writer had yet accomplished; and his works display an advance, not a retrogression in science."

Bede's tracts on metre, on the figures of speech in Scripture, and on orthography were probably written between 691 and 703. In 705 his small book *De Temporibus* appeared, and in 708 he wrote the letter to Plegwin on the six ages. Before 705 he wrote his metrical life of Cuthbert. According to Plummer, his commentaries on the Apocalypse, the Acts, the Epistles, Luke, and Samuel were written in or before 716 with two exegetical letters to Acca. After 716 he gave us the history of the abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and his commentary on Mark. Toward 720 appeared his prose life of Cuthbert, and his commentary on Genesis; before 725, the book *De Natura Rerum*, and during 725 his large work *De Temporum Ratione*.

Between 725 and 731 he wrote his commentaries on Ezra and Nehemiah, and books on the tabernacle and the temple. In 731 he finished his monumental work *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Race*. After this must be placed his *Retractions* on the Acts and his famous letter to Egbert. The exact date of the appearance of his commentaries on Proverbs, Canticles, the Song of Habakuk, Tobias, his questions on the books of Kings, and his description of the holy places is unknown. Neither can we determine when he wrote his martyrology, homilies, hymns, and a few minor tracts.

Above all Bede is conspicuous for his love of truth. He would not have his six hundred pupils "read a falsehood, nor labor therein without profit." Again he confesses, "I am my own secretary, I make my own notes, I am my own librarian." From his writings we can form an accurate estimate of the education received and given by the Anglo-Saxon women who were his contemporaries or lived after him.

"His scientific knowledge is the most accurate his times afforded. Still, as might be expected, some of his explanations are childlike; others erroneous; nor can he rid himself altogether of the superstitions of the day. He believes the comet to portend change of kingdoms, or pestilence, or war, or tempest, or drought. On the other hand, when he undertakes to explain the theory of the tides, he rises far above the crude notions of his times, and almost anticipates Newton."⁵⁶

He explains eclipses, the rainbow, and the formation of rain and hail. His good judgment made him condemn judicial astrology as false and pernicious. His natural love of music is revealed when he says, "among all the sciences this one is most commendable, pleasing, mirthful, and lovely. It makes a man liberal, cheerful, courteous, and amiable. It rouses him to battle, enables him to bear fatigue, comforts him under labor, refreshes the disturbed mind, takes away headaches, and soothes the desponding heart."

While many of Bede's works appeared in Latin, we must not overlook the labors he spent on the formation of the grammar of his native language. And in this perhaps he rendered

⁵⁶ Br. Azarias: *Development of Old English Thought*.

his best service to the education of Anglo-Saxon women. Rohrbacher, because of his treatises on grammar and orthography, credits Bede with impressing a character of regularity on the modern languages which in the eighth and ninth centuries were beginning to be formed out of the Latin and Germanic dialects. But greater far was his influence on the Anglo-Saxon dialect in which he both preached and wrote. An old poetic fragment of the twelfth century, found in Worcester cathedral, names him among other saints, "who taught our people in English," and lauds him for having "wisely translated for the instruction of his flock."

In its semi-barbarous state, the Anglo-Saxon language "was a barren combination of verbs, nouns, and pronouns, and nouns freely used in an adjective and verbal sense, and entirely destitute of all the particles. The change it underwent during the two centuries that preceded the time of Alfred was the transformation of a barbarous dialect into a finished grammatical language, and this change was mainly affected by the labors of the monks. Nor is it mere matter of conjecture that Bede had a considerable share in this great work. He was probably the first who applied himself to it, and has himself let us know the reasons which induced him to undertake the translations of certain familiar forms of prayer into the native dialect."⁵⁷

In 734, at the invitation of Archbishop Egbert, who then presided over the school of York, Bede spent several months in this famous monastery "for the sake of reading" in its well-stocked library. The next year he intended to repeat his visit, but declining health prevented. As an apology for not keeping his promise, he wrote his well known letter to Egbert in which, among other improvements, he suggests the appointment of priests to the rural districts, but they must be priests who would be diligent in instructing the peasantry, and who would teach them the Creed and the Our Father in their own tongue, "which I have myself translated," he adds, "for the benefit of the priests who are not familiar with the vernacular."

"Let them be taught," he says, "by what works they may please God, and from what things they must abstain; with what

⁵⁷ Drane: *Christian Schools and Scholars*.

sincerity they must believe in Him, and with what devotion they must pray; how diligently and frequently they must fortify themselves with the sign of the cross; and how salutary for every class of Christian is the daily reception of the Lord's Body and Blood, which is, you know, the constant practice of the Church throughout Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and the whole of the East." To us who have witnessed the change in the discipline of the sacraments inaugurated by Pius X and continued by his prudent successors, this is interesting testimony concerning the life of the Church in the eighth century. The interest is intensified when we find that Bede goes on to say that he knows many young persons of both sexes who might unhesitatingly be allowed to communicate at least on all Sundays and festivals.

Besides the translation of the prayers for the people, Bede put into Anglo-Saxon the Psalter and the four Gospels. His historical works are of course his greatest glory. He has left us four of these; the *Martyrology*, which in its present form has been manipulated by other hands than Bede's; *De Temporibus*, which consists of a few brief chapters on the division of time, the Easter calculations, and a short chronicle of the chief events in the six ages of time; *De Temporum Ratione*, an expansion of the former, one of his best known books; *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Race*, famous throughout the world of literature. "In chronology," says Plummer, "Bede has the enormous merit of being the first chronicler giving the date from Christ's birth, in addition to the year of the world, and thus introduced the use of the Dionysian era into western Europe."

The *Ecclesiastical History of the English Race* comprises five books. The venerable author begins with a description of Britain at the time of the Roman invasion by Julius Caesar, and ends his first book with the year 603, after the arrival of St. Augustine. He drew his matter from Pliny, Solinus, Orosius, Eutropius, Marcellinus, Comes, Gildas, the *Historia Brittonum*, the Passion of St. Alban, and a Life of St. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius. The second book tells of the death of Gregory the Great, and ends with 633, when Edwin of Northumbria was killed and Paulinus retreated to Rochester. In

this book he tells us how impressive was the scene when Edwin of Northumbria took counsel with his chief men about embracing the Faith, and of their subsequent baptism "with all the nobility of the nation, and a large number of the common sort." Here he gives us the striking simile of the sparrow. "The present life of man, O king, seems to me, in comparison of that time which is unknown to us, like the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad; the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out of another, whilst he is within, is safe from the wintry storm; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space, but of what went before or what is to follow we are utterly ignorant. If therefore this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed."

The third book carries us down to 664, with events centering around Oswald, Aidan, Fursey, Cedd, and Wilfrid. The fourth book opens with the death of Deusdedit in 664, announces the arrival in England of his successor Theodore with his learned companion Adrian, and terminates with the year 698. In it the author mentions Chad, Wilfrid, Ethelburga, Etheldreda, Hilda, Caedmon, and Cuthbert. The fifth book is the last. It tells the story of the vision of Drythelm, gives an account of St. John of Beverly, Afamnan, Aldhelm, and Wilfrid, with the letter of abbot Ceolfrid to Nechtan, king of the Picts. It states the end of the Easter controversy. With a wistful tone of regret Bede notes the departure of the Celtic missionaries from Northumbria. A brief statement of the condition of the country in 731 and a summary of the author's works brings to a close the first and greatest history of the English people.

"From the literary point of view, the book is admirable. There is no affectation of learning, no eccentricity of vocabulary. It seems to be one of the great services which Bede rendered to English writers that he gave currency to a direct and simple style. This merit is in part due to the tradition of the northern school in which he was brought up; but it is to his

own credit that he was not led away by the fascinations of the Latinity of Aldhelm."

Bede spared no pains in the making of his history. Nothelm, a learned priest, brought him from Rome the correspondence between Gregory the Great and Augustine. He gathered traditions, conversed with eyewitnesses of the events he related, and brought to bear upon his narrative the critical judgment of a trustworthy historian. Even a casual reader of his history can not help noticing the prominence given by Bede to the Anglo-Saxon women. No one knew better than he all the Church owed to them.

Of Etheldreda he sings:

"Triumphing joy attends the peaceful soul
When heat, nor rain, nor wishes mean control.
Thus Etheldreda, pure from sensual crime,
Bright, shining star, arose to bless our time!"

Were it not for Venerable Bede, we should know little or nothing of many of the women who are today the brightest gems in the crown of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Alcuin's effect upon English literature was not important. He was a great teacher rather than a great writer. His poems and letters, with some grammatical works, were the only productions of his that gained any popularity in England. And it must be remembered that most of these were written while he was at the court of Charles the Great. The Danish invasion destroyed all that might throw some light on his literary labors when he was at York. His textbooks were of great value to his numerous pupils on the continent, and show the wide culture attainable in his Northumbrian monastery.

In the dedicatory letter to Gisela and Rotrude, which accompanied his commentary on the gospel of St. John, Alcuin reveals the timorous, conservative attitude of his mind in all his literary efforts. It is worth quoting: "I have reverently traversed the storehouses of the early Fathers, and whatever I have been able to find there, I have sent of it for you to taste. First of all, I have sought help from St. Augustine, who has devoted the greatest study to expounding the most holy words of this most holy Gospel. Next, I have drawn somewhat from the lesser

works of St. Ambrose, that most holy doctor, and likewise from the homilies of the distinguished father, Gregory the Great. I have also taken much from the homilies of the blessed presbyter Bede, and from other holy Fathers, whose interpretations I have here set forth. For I have preferred to employ their thoughts and words, rather than to venture anything of my own audacity, even if the curiosity of my readers were to approve of it, and by a most cautious manner of writing, I have made it my care, by the help of God, not to set down anything contrary to the thoughts of the Fathers."

Alcuin's literary sources are all Latin. In his educational writings he depends mainly on Isidore and Bede, with occasional help from Cassiodorus. He used the treatise on *The Categories*, which is sometimes ascribed to Augustine. He was familiar with Boëthius, but does not mention Martianus Capella. His educational works are: *On Grammar*, *On Orthography*, *On Rhetoric and the Virtues*, *On Dialectics*, *A Disputation with Pepin*, and a complicated treatise called *De Cursu et Saltu Lunae ac Bissexto*.

But it is in his letters that we meet the real Alcuin. There he speaks heart to heart with his correspondent, not as a teacher, but as a loving father, and a most devoted friend. His contribution to literature and learning is well summed up by Andrew F. West in a sympathetic life of the great scholasticus: "Perceiving that the precious treasure of knowledge was then hidden in a few books, he made it his care to transmit to future ages copies undisfigured by slips of the pen or mistakes of the understanding. Thus in every way that lay within his power, he endeavored to put the fortunes of learning for the times that should succeed him in a position of advantage, safeguarded by an abundance of truthfully transcribed books, interpreted by the teachers of his own training, sheltered within the Church, and defended by the civil power."

Anglo-Saxon literature is the oldest of the vernacular literatures of modern Europe. All have been influenced by Latin, but the Anglo-Saxon alone is practically unmixed with any external elements. Of 40,000 words in our language, virtually five eighths of them are of pure Saxon origin, and this after thirteen centuries of intercourse with continental tongues.

The Saxons became familiar with Latin literature before they discovered the value of their own. They acquired the habits and instruments of literature through the education that Latin gave them.

To the great King Alfred belongs the honor of discovering the value of his own vernacular. He is more illustrious for his literary labors than for his military achievements. Through his intellectual activity, the center of learning was transferred from Northumbria to Wessex. Asser, in his life of Alfred, has the distinction of giving us "the earliest biography of an English layman." He tells us very quaintly how by merest accident, the king, "inspired by God, began to study the rudiments of divine Scripture on the sacred solemnity of St. Martin, November 11; and he continued to learn the flowers collected by certain masters and to reduce them into the form of one book, as he was then able, mixed one with another, until it became almost as large as a psalter. This book he called his *Enchiridion* or *Manual*, because he carefully kept it at hand night and day, and found as he told me, no small consolation therein." This was in 887. And it is worthy of note that Alfred's biographer was a Celt.

The *Handbook* consisted of extracts from the Latin Bible and from the Fathers. Asser, who suggested its compilation to the great king, says it was an assemblage of *flosculi*, culled from various sources. Alfred first wrote these excerpts in Latin, and then rendered them into English. But his real literary labors were inaugurated by his translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis*. It was quite natural that this should be so. Danish raids had totally demolished learning throughout the island. All literary culture had died out in a single generation, because with the destruction of the monasteries had disappeared the one sole means of obtaining an education among the Anglo-Saxons. "One faint link with the world of learning remained; the consolations of religion could not be foregone; and their efficacy was not thought to depend upon the intelligence either of teacher or hearer. The preacher, if able to read, might recite what he could not understand; if unable, he might be taught to repeat it by rote, to equal purpose. Priests, however, learned or unlearned, there must be. This explains the crass ignorance

in which Alfred found his clergy—a condition not discreditable to them since they could not avert it; and even honorable, since it attests their fortitude in remaining at their posts at a period of universal desolation.”⁵⁸

Alfred fully realized that a complete restoration of learning could be affected only by raising up an educated clergy. The traditions of his nation had taught him to look to the great Gregory, “the apostle of the English,” as a guide and mentor in his arduous labors. He had the advantages of travel. He saw what had been accomplished by Charles the Great and his successors for Frankland through the clergy. “His father’s marriage with the emperor’s daughter Judith cements relationship with the continent and the insularity of Britain was henceforth broken down. The importance for literature of this emergence can not be over estimated.”⁵⁹

In his preface, the royal writer states that the *Cura Pastoralis* is only the first of a series of books which he intends to translate in order that finally every free born youth in England who has the necessary leisure, may be instructed in his mother tongue. This preface ranks among Alfred’s most important original contributions to literature. In it he speaks of the decay of learning in Britain, asserts his determination to reform the schools of Wessex, and defends his use of the vernacular. He recalled how the Old Testament was first written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek and Latin. He draws the attention of his readers to the fact that every other nation has some portion of ancient literature in their own tongue. In translating into West Saxon “the book called in Latin *Pastoralis*, and in English *Hierdeboc*, sometimes word for word, and sometimes sense for sense,” Alfred was helped by his teachers Plegmund, Asser, Grimbald, and John.

Alfred next wished to give the English people a compendium of universal history and geography, so he chose the *Historia adversus Paganos* of the Spanish ecclesiastic Orosius. It dates from the fifth century. Orosius was a disciple of St. Augustine, and in his *Historia* he tried to prove that the decline of the

⁵⁸ Garnett and Gosse: *Illustrated History of English Literature*.

⁵⁹ *Cambridge History of English Literature*.

Roman empire was due to other causes than the rise of Christianity and the disuse of pagan deities. "It is not merely an historical narrative, but as satisfactory an approach to the philosophy of history" as the limited outlook of the age afforded.

It was to be expected that Alfred, after having given his people a universal history, should make available for them the reading of the history of their own country. His translation of Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* is more exact and less free than his other productions. "So English is it in subject and sentiment," says Professor Garnett, "that in rendering it, or causing it to be rendered, Alfred but restored it to the language to which it should have always belonged."

But the book that was especially his own, and which appealed most intimately to Alfred, was the beautiful treatise of Boëthius on the *Consolations of Philosophy*. It speaks well for the intellectual culture of Alfred that in the midst of his court, besieged by enemies without and the needs of many within his kingdom, he could appreciate and find time to translate this exquisite work of the great Roman senator. "There can be no surer touchstone," asserts Professor Garnett, "of a refined and sensitive mind than its appreciation of this book. Alfred's admiration for it, the predilection with which he evidently regarded it, and his numerous variations and embellishments, sever him at once from the multitude of contemporary kings, and place him on a level with the other two monarchs who have most admirably united the philosophic character with efficiency in rule and administration, Marcus Aurelius and Akhbar. Any of the three, it is probable, if transferred to the place of the others, would have signalized himself in nearly the same manner. It should not be forgotten that of all the numerous medieval translations of the *Consolation*, one of which is by Chaucer, Alfred's is the greatest."

We feel warranted in believing that the noble king shared his intellectual tastes with his sons and daughter, whose subsequent lives prove them worthy offspring of so talented a father.

During the early part of the middle ages, we find the works of St. Augustine very much appreciated by educated minds. Charles the Great made *The City of God* his constant companion. And Alfred the Great was equally fond of *Soliloquia*, by

the same author. "Alfred was attracted to Augustine by the nature of his theme," says Professor Thomas of the University of London. "The Latin work is a treatise on God and the soul, in which much space is devoted to a discussion of immortality. The spirit of the whole translation is deeply religious."

There is a West Saxon translation of the *Dialogues* of St. Gregory the Great, which, if not translated by Alfred himself, assuredly owed its origin to his suggestion. Both Asser and William of Malmesbury ascribe it to Werefrith, bishop of Worcester, who did his work at the king's bidding. It is partly in dialogue form. Hence its name. In it Gregory unburdens his mind by telling the stories to his deacon Peter. They rehearse the marvelous, revealing the simple faith of the age.

The West Saxon *Martyrology* probably was written in Alfred's reign. The oldest manuscript of it extant, dates from the ninth century. It is in the British Museum. The saints to which it refers belong either to Alfred's time or to the reign preceding his. It is incomplete, extending from December 31 to December 21.

The so-called *Psalter* of this period is attributed to Alfred. William of Malmesbury says Alfred began a translation, but was unable to finish it.

But Alfred's great literary achievement was the prominence he gave to the vernacular. Under his impetus it took great strides in its development, withstood the Norman inroads, and is today the sinew of the English language whose accents are heard from zone to zone. It seems to partake of the sturdiness of the race with which it originated. It thrives in every clime, and multiplies on any soil. It is on the lips of well-nigh 200,000,000 people. America and Australia, Egypt and the Philippines, India and New Zealand, offer a vaster scope for our mother tongue than did the England of Alfredian days. But we must remember that to Alfred more than to any other single individual do we owe that language of which we are so justly proud. "He found learning dead, and he restored it; education neglected, and he revived it."

A nation's laws form an important part of its literature. They evidence development in learning and civilization. "It is one of the characteristic marks of English liberty," says Black-

stone, "that our common law depends upon custom, which carries this internal evidence of freedom along with it, that it probably was introduced by the common consent of the people."

English laws originated among the Jutes, Angles and Saxons in their continental abode. They were brought by them to their island home, where they were broadened by Christianity. The Synods and Councils of the Church did much to form and modify English law. In 689 the laws of Wilitread were enacted in the presence of archbishop and bishop. The influence of the Church is traceable in fasting laws and holidays. The sanction of ecclesiastical law is first promulgated in Theodore's *Penitentials*. To the fines is usually added fasting, which was surely a wise regulation for a people so addicted to intemperance.

In the beginning the laws dealt mainly with personal injuries such as murder and theft, and in punishment heavy physical penalties were inflicted. Alfred's laws aimed at protecting individual liberty.

Under King Ina and his successors, probably, gilds originated, were encouraged and recognized, while under Charles the Great and his descendants they were suppressed and persecuted. There were trade gilds, religious gilds, and benevolent gilds. Women were the founders and members of many such confraternities which became a necessity when the Danes appeared in the land.

By English law both ecclesiastical and civil, slavery was discouraged. At the Council of Chalcuith the bishops pledged themselves to manumit all the slaves in their possession at their death. In Edgar's laws the Christian spirit was so strong that calumny was rigorously punished by having the tongue of the guilty one cut out. With Ethelred greater value is placed on human life when he enacted: "And the ordinance of Our Lord and his witan is that Christian men for all too little be not condemned to death; but in general let mild punishments be decreed for the people's need; and let not for a little, God's handiwork and His own purchase, which He dearly bought, be destroyed." Canute in his centralization of the government, put great stress on justice in his laws. Thus we may trace the development of English thought from Ethelbert laying down the law, to Alfred, by the decalogue, substantiating it, and Canute

emphasizing its importance by the justice on which it stands.

In old English literature the sentiment of nationality is quite lacking. It was Columba, not Alcuin, who wrote: "My foot is in my little boat, but my sad heart ever bleeds. There is a gray eye which ever turns to Erinn; but never in this life shall it see Erinn, nor her sons, nor her daughters. From the high prow I look over the sea, and great tears are in my gray eyes when I turn to Erinn—to Erinn where the songs of the birds are so sweet, and where the clerks sing like the birds; where the young are so gentle, and the old so wise; where the great men are so noble to look at, and the women so fair to wed."⁶⁰

The Old English Chronicle, is most characteristic of English genius. In a plain, unvarnished style, it records deeds and dates. There is admiration for national pluck, but little sentiment, and less poetry. Among Teutonic nations it was a general custom to keep a record of events. The oldest manuscript of *The Chronicle* dates from 891, and was first traced by a Northumbrian hand. Under Alfred it received a new impulse. Archbishop Phlegmund enlarged it into an historic narrative. It savors of the soil. It injected into English thought a taste for historical research which has become characteristic of the race.

It was Alfrie who gave the Anglo-Saxons their first Latin-English dictionary, because, said he, "a certain Mass priest, who was my master, and who had the book of Genesis, could scarcely understand Latin." About 990 he prepared his *Homilies*, which are simply translations from the sermons of Latin authors. He wished them to be read to the people on Sundays and feasts. They are purely doctrinal, with scant traces of emotion. Like many of his contemporaries, he expected the end of the world in the year 1000, and aimed at preparing his hearers to meet the "many calamities among mankind before the end cometh, according to what Our Lord said in the Gospel."

Alfrie was only one of numerous ecclesiastics who at this time wrote sermons and homilies. Many delighted in putting before the faithful the doctrine and devout practices of the

⁶⁰ Montalembert: *Monks of the West*.

Church, which they compiled in their mother-tongue. This period was a fruitful one for the development of Old English. We must not fail to mention the well-known *Blickling Homilies*, which were written about 971. They are so called because they are preserved in Blickling Hall, Norfolk. They give us many traditions and legends concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints.

Alfric Bata, a disciple and namesake of the above, wrote the *Colloquies*, which raise the curtain and reveal the private life of the people of his day. Arranged in the usual catechetical form, they let us converse with the farmer, the shepherd, the craftsman and the student. A rigorous life did those sturdy people live, far removed from effeminateness. School life, even in the eighth and ninth centuries, was a series of floggings for the English pupils, and a chronic state of fault-finding for the English teachers, men and women.

Early English churchmen have left us some paraphrases of the *Bestiaries*. Although of Eastern origin, they were popular throughout the Christian world. They were really parables drawn from the habits of animals. The phoenix, the panther, and the whale seem to have been the most popular.

CHAPTER XII

THE DISSOLUTION

We have now reached the eve of the Norman Conquest. With the foreign element, new models in architecture, art, and letters are introduced into England. The Britons, with their Roman, Saxon and Danish blending, are about to receive the refining influence of the continent from the Normans. The social and military organism of feudalism will initiate the virile mind of the Anglo-Saxon into the "finer fancies" and "lighter thought" of the gay Norman. Inter-marriage will soon spread from rank to rank, and when Anselm crowns Matilda as Henry's queen, ecclesiastical sanction is given to the wedding of Anglo-Saxon womanhood with Norman knighthood. But as women usually have a powerful though indirect influence in the shaping of a nation's destiny, so in this case, Anglo-Saxon was the language which finally prevailed in the "blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."

Under Norman and Plantagenet rule, women in England continued their literary and educational work among their own sex. With a thoroughness and independence characteristic of their race, they extended their influence into ever widening circles. All classes of society were benefited by the teaching of the consecrated women. As in every religious community there were those who performed manual labor, and others who engaged in literary pursuits, so the knowledge imparted by the nuns was beneficial to the rural as well as to the lettered class. Educational institutions conducted by women in England went on increasing in number until toward the first half of the sixteenth century they numbered almost one hundred and fifty. And when Henry VIII abolished monastic life in his realm, women were more keenly affected than men.

"The cleric, even though his monk's garb were torn from him, and he was forced to trudge the world in poverty, could not be deprived of the sacred character of the clerical state; but the nun, driven from the dismantled walls of her convent, and the veil of her profession denied her, could not but suffer the pains of daily martyrdom.

"At the time of the dissolution there were in England some one hundred and forty convents of women. Of these, rather more than half belonged to the Benedictine Order. They were scattered over the face of the country; Yorkshire containing a greater proportion than any other county. The majority were not possessed of a yearly income sufficient to exempt them from the operation of the act by which the lesser houses passed into the king's hands. In Yorkshire alone, more than half the convents were suppressed under cover of this act of dissolution."⁶¹

Writing in 1546 to Bullinger from Strasburg, Hooper says, "England has at this time at least 10,000 nuns, not one of whom is allowed to marry." Gasquet considers this an exaggeration and puts the number at 1,560.

"The convents in England were mostly small as regards numbers and poor in their resources. In fact, had not the king been persuaded to hold his hand for a time, the act of dissolving monasteries under £200 a year would have swept away all but eighteen of the religious houses of women. Only twelve out of the eighty-four convents of the Benedictine Order were possessed of revenues greater than the pecuniary limit assigned by the act. Of the twenty-six Cistercian houses one only, that of Tarrant, in Dorsetshire, was exempted from the operation of the act; whilst of the rest, only one Augustinian, the Bridgettines of Sion, the Ladies of St. John of Jerusalem at Buckland, and two houses of nuns of the Order of St. Gilbert, were rich enough to escape suppression in the year 1536."⁶²

Speaking of the abolition of the monasteries under Henry VIII and Elizabeth, the learned Cardinal Gasquet continues:

"The saddest and strangest result consequent on the suppression of the convents was that men were made to profit by the loss which women had sustained. The revenues of the houses that were suppressed had been intended for the sole use and behoof of women, and had been administered by them in this sense for centuries. When they were appropriated by Henry VIII it never occurred to him or his ministers to make

⁶¹ Gasquet: *Henry VIII and The English Monasteries*.

⁶² *Ibid.*

any provision for the education of women in lieu of that which had been so ruthlessly wrested from them. Thus the nunnery of St. Radegund together with its revenues and possessions, was transformed into Jesus College, Cambridge, while from the suppressed convents of Bromhall in Berkshire and Lillechurch in Kent funds were secured for the foundation and endowment of St. John's College also at Cambridge."

The introduction of Protestantism into England was a death blow to education in general, and to female education in particular.

The Bodleian Library, now Oxford's pride, was founded in 1597 by the prudent Sir Thomas Bodley. He acknowledged that his purpose was to save from wanton destruction the remaining precious manuscripts of old collections. The nucleus of the library was the fragments of ancient libraries which the founder tells us "lay in every part waste and ruined." In one of Elizabeth's own parliaments, it was publicly asserted that the institutions established during her reign only partially replaced what had been demolished. It is to the zeal of her Catholic sister Mary, that we owe the revival of the universities from the utter decay into which they had fallen when the religious revolution broke out in the land of St. Hilda and St. Mildred.

As Dr. Jessop expresses it, "the monasteries were plundered even to their very pots and pans," until seaports as far south as Spain marveled at the variety and cheapness of the spoils.

In the midst of the universal gloom occasioned by the Protestant revolution, "Catholics in England were found in corners, and alleys, and cellars, and on the housetops, or in the recesses of the country; cut off from the populous world around them, and dimly seen, as if through a mist, or in twilight, as ghosts flitting to and fro."

It was then that flitted among them an angel of light in the person of Mary Ward. By a coincidence not unfrequent in history, she was a Yorkshire woman, a worthy descendant of St. Hilda. She founded her Congregation of women to carry on, under the changed conditions of the Protestant revolution, the education of her own sex. With her Institute of Mary she inaugurated a work which, during four centuries, has developed

into England's present elaborate system of higher education for Catholic women.

Today, in the twentieth century, the Church sees in her countless thousands of female religious, consecrated to the manifold labors of Christian charity, only spiritual offsprings of a Hilda and a Lioba, a Tetta and a Hroswitha. She regards them not with astonishment, but with loving complacency and generous encouragement. To them she opens wide the arms of her maternal assistance. Every woman within the fold of the Catholic Church, be she maid or mother, religious or secular, may become a co-laborer in the spreading of the Gospel. In the Church of Christ the gentler sex may find that work for which a Florence Nightingale sought in vain elsewhere. Rome provides a systematized activity for her unmarried women, the lack of which Cardinal Newman deplored in the Anglican communion.

The wealth of her intellectual treasury, accumulated through well-nigh twenty centuries, the Church of Rome places at the disposal of her daughters. She bids them now, as in Anglo-Saxon days, draw from it new things and old. Whether at Oxford or Montreal, Washington or Melbourne, English speaking Catholic women today as of yore, receive and impart that wisdom of the spirit which is life and peace, and endureth unto length of days, for "to be allied to wisdom is immortality."

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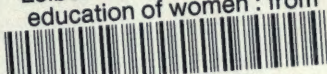
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